Resistance is futile! Now incorporating PCGAMES

PC GAMER

The World's Best-Selling PC Games Magazine

CD-ROM Edition

ON THE CD

Play two bloody missions in Bungie's...

Myth II

Plus Half-Life: Uplink, Close Combat III, Rollcage, *and more!*

STAR WARS: EPISODE I

The Phantom Menace blasts onto PC — and it kicks ass!

LucasArts' next-generation *Star Wars* games revealed at last — including amazing pictures that you won't see *anywhere* else!

Episode I uber-baddie Darth Maul demonstrates why you wouldn't want to meet him in a dark alley.

22 REVIEWS

SimCity 3000 • *Myth II* • *Luftwaffe Commander* • *Wargasm* • *Beavis and Butt-head: Bunghole in One*...and new hardware!

EXPERT STRATEGY

Gangsters • *Thief: The Dark Project* • *Alpha Centauri* • and more!

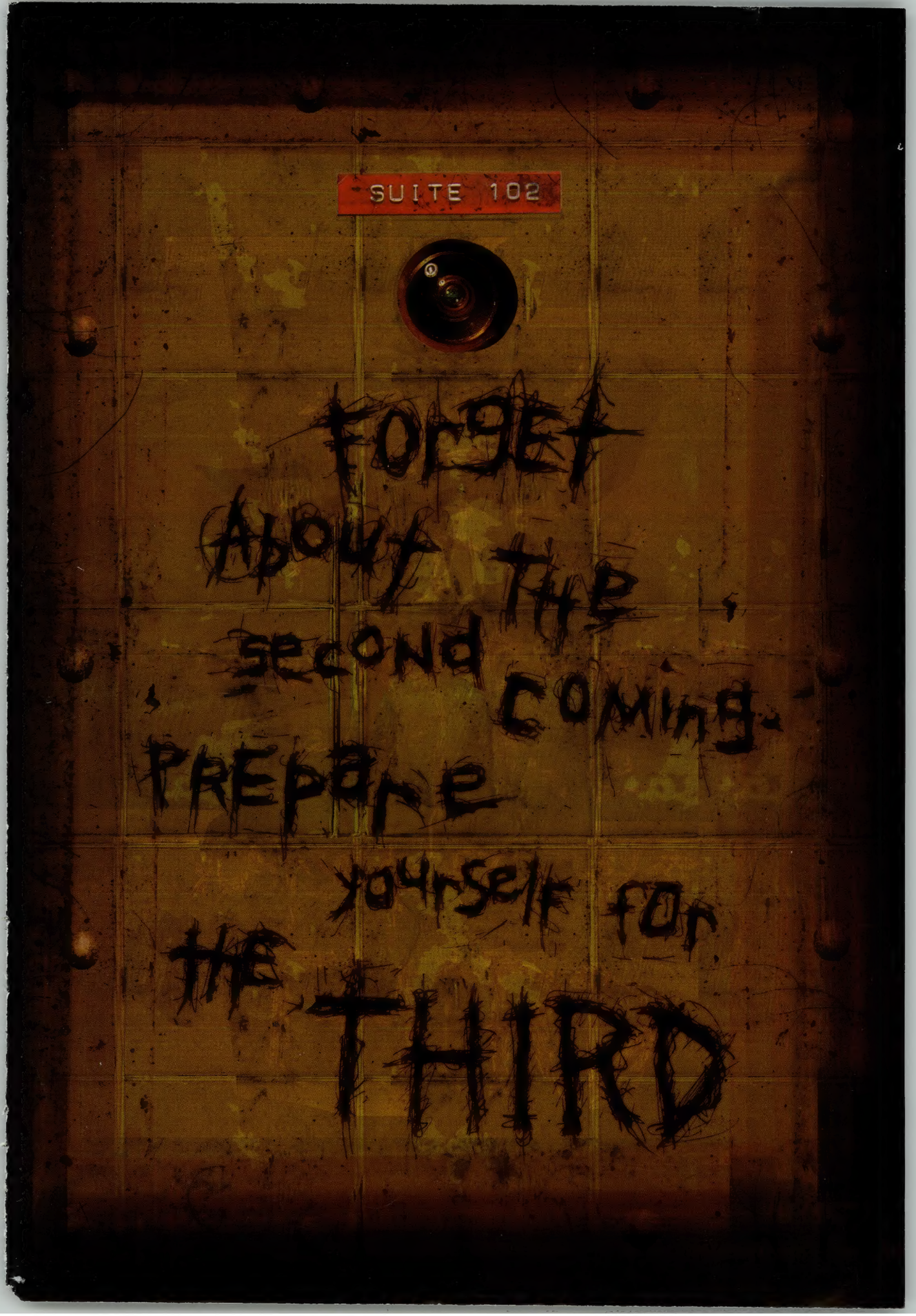
www.pcgamer.com
Vol. 6 No. 5 • MAY 1999

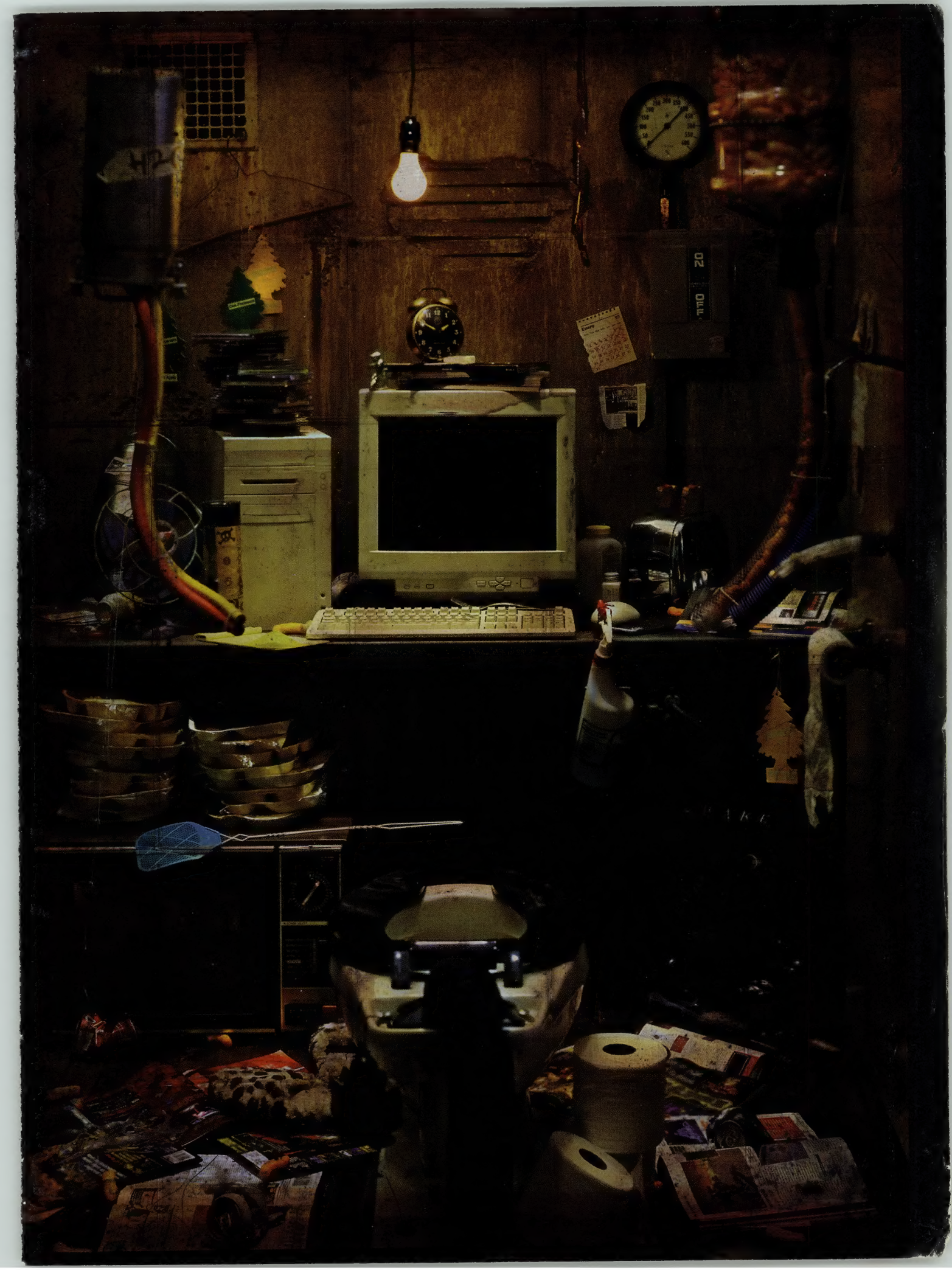
imagine MEDIA WITH PASSION

$7.99 U.S. and $8.99 Canada

05

0 09281 02326 5


SUITE 102
FORGET
ABOUT THE
SECOND COMING.
PREPARE
YOURSELF FOR
THE THIRD

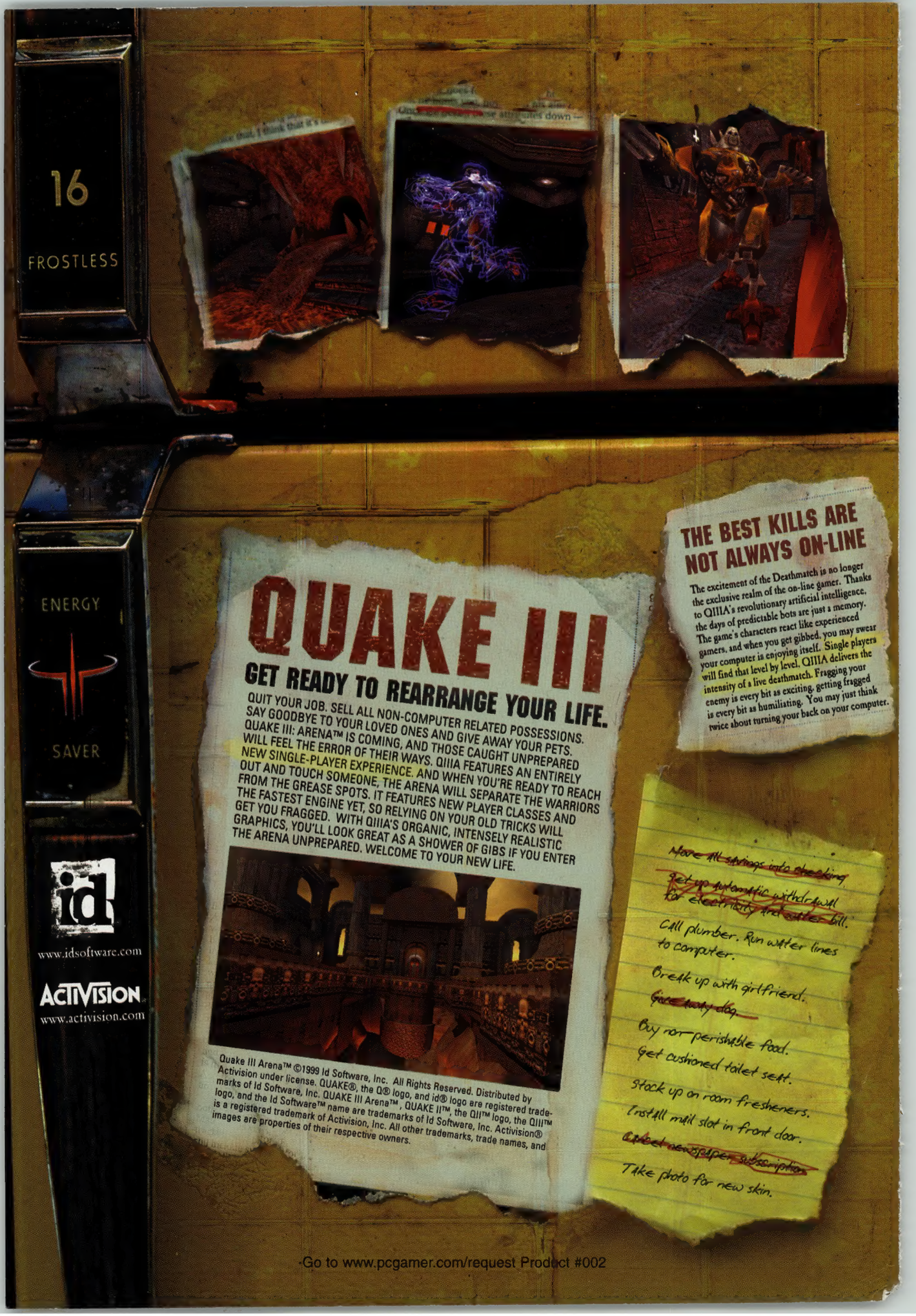


QUAKE



ARENA™

1999



Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #002

PC GAMER

VOLUME 6 • NUMBER 5 • MAY 1999

Cover Story

60

As the anticipation builds for *The Phantom Menace*, LucasArts is taking advantage of the fervor with two new games based on this hottest of properties. We have the most up-to-date, in-depth coverage you'll find on these must-have games, so turn to our feature to put yourself in the know.

Blasts from the Past

Cover illustration by Arnaud Mayet

Feature

The Race for the Pennant

78



PC Gamer takes you out to the old ball game with a spring training round-up of this year's baseball offerings, so get the peanuts and popcorn ready as we tell you which ones have the best chance of hitting a long ball out of the park.

Scoops



Prince of Persia 3D

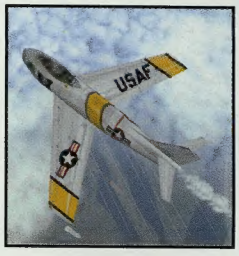
30

The original breathed new life into the side-scrolling action game; now the prince is back and looking to redefine the 3D-action/adventure genre.

MiG Alley

36

Rowan Software hopes to bring the Korean conflict to life as successfully as its previous flight sim, *Flying Corps*, did with World War One.





Sinistar Unleashed

40

This 1980s arcade classic is getting the late 1990s treatment on the PC, and the results are looking pretty amazing.

Hardware

143 The Hard Stuff

The Macintosh has always had its place in the graphic design field, but now Apple is trying to convince gamers that its latest system, the G3, can compete — and win — in a PC-dominated gaming world. We'll tell you how it compares to the PC, plus our usual assortment of hardware yeas and nays.

Reviews

134 Beavis and Butt-head Bunghole in One

113a Dark Side of the Moon

137 Enemy Infestation

120 Extreme Tennis

133 FireTeam

128 Luftwaffe Commander

101 Myth II: Soulblighter

111 Newman/Haas Racing

127 Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus

136 SCARS

98 SimCity 3000

112 Thunder Brigade

108 Top Gun: Hornet's Nest

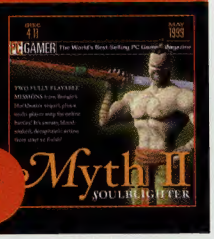
107 Turok 2: Seeds of Evil

118 Uprising 2: Lead and Destroy

124 Wargasm

Disc Pages

A quick guide for extracting maximum gaming goodness from our disc.



8

Strategy

180 Thief: The Dark Project, Part 2
As this game gets harder, our tips make things go easier.

188 Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri, Part 2
The experts shows you how to win using each of the game's seven factions.

196 Gangsters: Organized Crime
Don't let the gangsters take you out. Use our guide to take them out first.

199 Cheater's Corner
Beating a game fair and square is for saps — cheating is cool.

Departments

46 Eyewitness
The restructuring at Sierra and Microsoft's new sports game lineup are among our lead stories this month.

164 Extended Play — T. Liam McDonald
Tom looks at *Rainbow Six: Eagle Watch* and a new scenery pack for Microsoft's *Flight Simulator 98*.

167 Multi-Play — Jason Bates
As the Internet becomes more mainstream, Jason wonders what effect it will have on hard-core gamers.

168 The Point After — Rob Smolka
Smoke tells you where to find some of the best user-created sports add-ons.

171 The Killing Box — Michael Luton
Sandmoose feels the Professional Gamers' League could take a few lessons from professional wrestling.

172 Alternate Lives — Michael Wolf
Will *Vampire: The Masquerade* cross the gap between computerized and tabletop roleplaying?

175 The Desktop General — William R. Trotter
The Colonel fills us in on some tidbits from the wargaming world.

176 Sim Column — Dan Bennett
We've all had our fingers burned by "minimum system requirements" in the past — here's how to avoid it.

201 Letters
If you write it, we will read it.

208 Next Issue
Next month we bring you the first-ever look at *Rogue Spear*, the sequel to *Rainbow Six*, and our Hot 100 preview.

PC Gamer (ISSN-1080-4471) is published monthly by Imagine Media, 150 North Hill Dr., Brisbane, CA 94005. Periodicals Class postage paid at Brisbane, CA, and additional mailing offices. Newsstand distribution is handled by the Curtis Circulation Company. Subscriptions: One year basic rate (12 issues): US: $35.00. Canada: $43.95. Foreign: $67. Canadian price includes postage and GST (GST #128220688). Outside US and Canada: Add $2.00 per issue. For customer service, write: *PC Gamer* Customer Service, P.O. Box 51199, Boulder, CO 80322, or call: (800) 898-7159 in the U.S., (415) 468-2500 outside the U.S. **Postmaster** please send change of address to *PC Gamer*, P.O. Box 51199, Boulder, CO 80322. Corporate, advertising sales, circulation, editorial and production offices: 150 North Hill Dr., Brisbane, CA 94005. Phone: (415) 468-4684. Fax: (415) 468-4686. Editorial information should be addressed to Editor, *PC Gamer*, 150 North Hill Dr., Brisbane, CA 94005. Overnight delivery parcels should be addressed to *PC Gamer*, 150 North Hill Dr., Brisbane, CA 94005. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned or acknowledged. Imagine Media also publishes *Games Business, Next Generation, Maximum PC, PC Accelerator, MacAddict, Business 2.0*, and *PlayStation Magazine*.

Entire contents copyright 1999, Imagine Media. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without permission is prohibited. Reproduction on the Internet of the articles and pictures in this magazine is illegal without the prior written consent of *PC Gamer*. Game Players, Game Players Guide, and Game Players Encyclopedia are tradenames of Imagine Media. Products named in these pages are tradenames or trademarks of their respective companies. Imagine Media is not affiliated with the companies or products covered in *PC Gamer*. IPM# 0781118. **Produced in U.S.A.**

Standard Mail enclosed in the following editions: B, B1, B2, C, D, D1, D2, D3, D4.

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage Paid
Waseca, MN
Permit No. 261

VISIT PC GAMER ONLINE AT WWW.PCGAMER.COM



Welcome, PC Games readers!

Yes, you read that strap across the top of this month's cover correctly — *PC Gamer* has joined forces with its former rival publication *PC Games*, and the result is a bigger, stronger, and better magazine than ever before. Imagine Media, the parent company of *PC Gamer*, recently completed the purchase of *PC Games* from IDG Media, incorporating the latter into the former. As of now, *PC Games* has ceased publication in its own right, but the magazine's loyal army of readers need not worry — its name will live on within the pages of *PC Gamer*.

So, if you're a *PC Games* reader who picked us up because you saw the magazine's logo on our cover, I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you aboard. Don't be frightened, we're not a wicked stepmother — more like a generous but slightly eccentric uncle. I, for one, am immensely pleased to have such a large family of gamers joining the *PC Gamer* ranks — if you haven't checked us out before, I think you'll like what you find inside. Basically, we're hella tough.

But what exactly does "incorporation" mean to you, the reader? For the answer to that question, tune in next month when we'll have more detailed information on how you *PC Games* readers can get the most out of *PC Gamer*. In the meantime, tuck in to this month's editorial feast, including our succulent look at the new *Star Wars: Episode I* games, a mouth-watering new-season baseball games preview, and the usual tantalizing buffet of news, reviews, strategy, hardware, and all-round frivolity. Now if you'll excuse me, all this writing has suddenly made me hungry....

Gary Whitta, Editor-in-chief

Unreal™ TOURNAMENT™



- All-new and enhanced big body-count weaponry - the Redeemer, the IMPACT Hammer and more.



- The most complete and challenging online multi-player experience ever.



- A single-player experience like no other – Guide your team to the title of Unreal Grand Master!



- Train for combat in Novice mode. Or go Hardcore for even more intense action.



- Over 30 unique environments torqued by the Unreal engine.



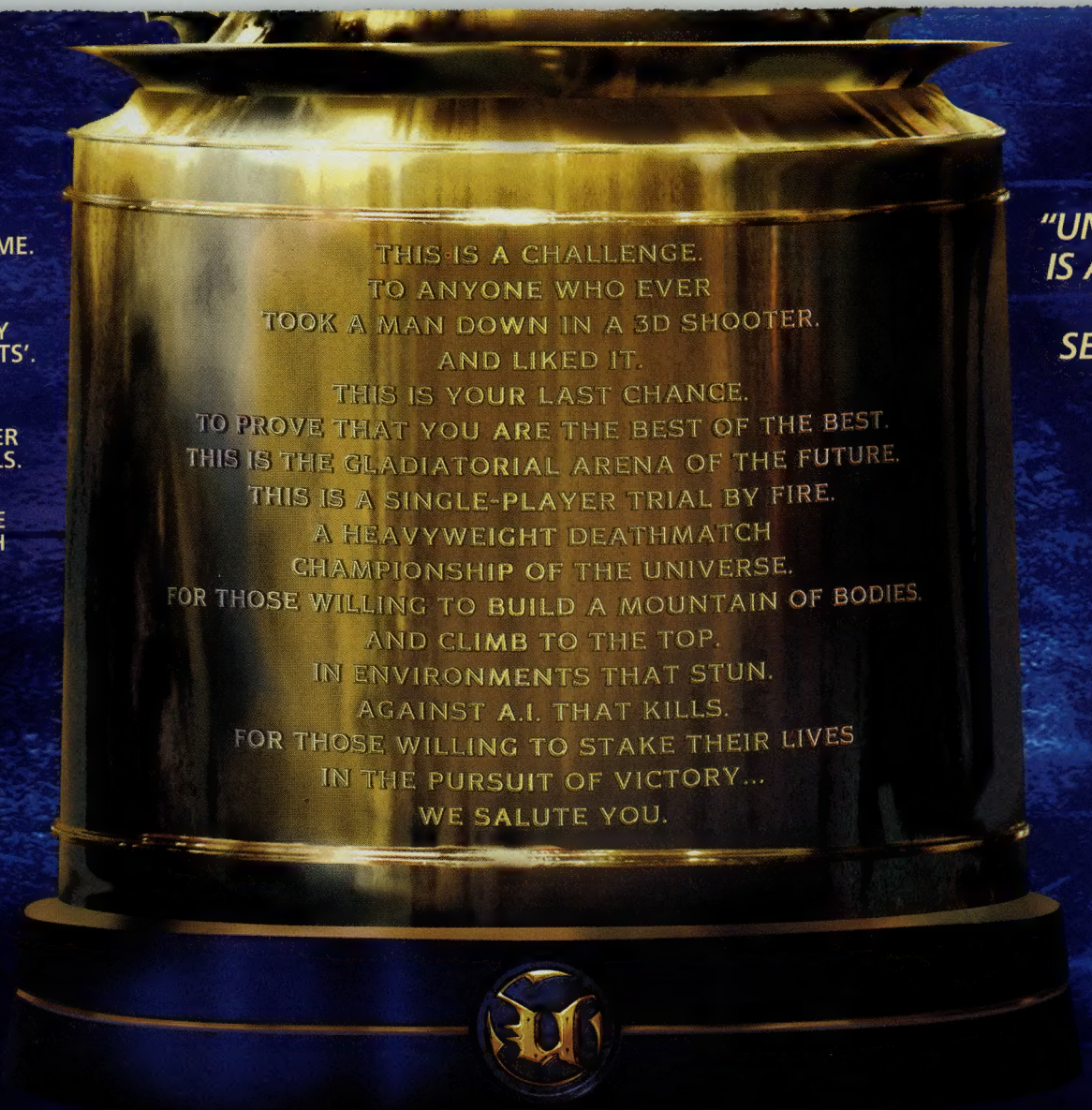
- Completely customizable "bots" with superior A.I. -"bots" take orders and team up with you.

AN ALL- NEW SINGLE AND MULTI-PLAYER TOURNAMENT GAME.
[DOES NOT REQUIRE UNREAL TO PLAY]

LEARN TEAM-BASED GAMEPLAY WITH AND AGAINST VIRTUAL 'BOTS'.
[WITHOUT FEAR OF OBLITERATION]

LEARN THE JOY OF MULTI-PLAYER MAYHEM WITH VOICE TUTORIALS.

GET ONLINE AND FRAG ON THE SERVER OF YOUR CHOICE WITH A COUPLE OF CLICKS.



"UNREAL TOURNAMENT IS A NEXT-GENERATION GAME IN EVERY SENSE OF THE TERM."

- THE ADRENALINE VAULT

Win $100,000+

Enter the **UNREAL MOD CONTEST** in association with **MPLAYER.**

RATING PENDING RP ESRB

EPIC

The Best Hardware for the Best Software.

www.unreal.com

ENTER THE UNREAL WORLD NOW – Download the demo at unreal.gtgames.com

AVAILABLE NOW! UNREAL MISSION PACK: RETURN TO NA PALI. Compatible with Unreal and Unreal Tournament.

Digital Extremes

GT Interactive Software
www.gtgames.com

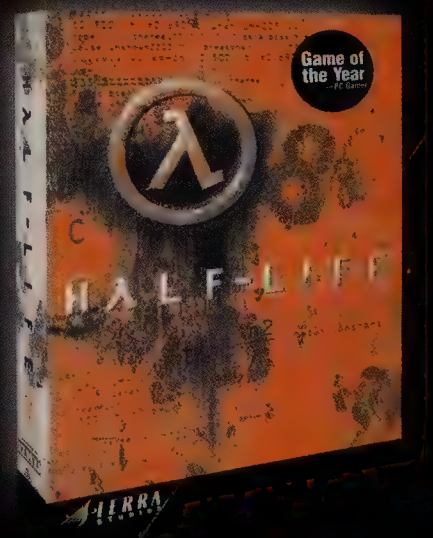
Unreal™ Tournament © 1999 Epic Megagames, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Created by Epic Megagames, Inc. In collaboration with Digital Extremes. Published and distributed by GT Interactive Software Corp. GT is a trademark and the GT logo is a registered trademark of GT Interactive Software Corp. Unreal and the Unreal logos are trademarks of Epic Megagames, Inc. Microsoft ® and Windows ® are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. MMX™ and the MMX Logo™ are trademarks of Intel Corporation. All rights reserved. Used with permission. The 3Dfx Interactive logo is a trademark of 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. MPlayer and the MPlayer logos are trademarks of MPlayer Interactive, Inc. Heat and the Heat Logo are trademarks of Heat Interactive. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies.


"GAME OF
Awarded by over 30 publications, including Computer Gaming World,
HALF
PLAY THE DEMO
www.game of the year.com

THE YEAR”

PC Gamer, PC Games, CNET Gamecenter, Blue’s News, PC Accelerator...

HALF-LIFE™



SIERRA™ STUDIOS

DEVELOPED BY VALVE™

MATURE M AGES 17+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

© 1999 Sierra On-Line, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Sierra, Sierra Studios and Half-Life are trademarks of Sierra On-Line, Inc. © 1997 Valve LLC. All Rights Reserved. Valve and the Valve logo are trademarks of Valve, LLC. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #094

A CD Stuffed Full of Greatness!

It's another exciting month for *PC Gamer's* one and only CD, and this time around we've got some of the hottest games available! Not only did we score the *Myth II: Soulblighter* demo, one of the most intense new strategy games to come out in the past year, but we've also got the demo of *PC Gamer*'s Game of the Year — *Half-Life*! The *Half-Life: Uplink* demo contains a 100-percent-new level created just for the demo, and what a mini-game it is! Monsters, soldiers, and explosions, oh my!

Of course, there's plenty more to see and do with *The CD*. We've got some other stellar games for you to try out, such as *Close Combat III: The Russian Front, Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire,* and *Commandos: Beyond the Call of Duty* as well as an incredible assortment of add-ons for your favorite games. Don't forget to try out the special *PC Gamer* cars for different racing games, as detailed in Rob Smolka's The Point After column this month — and the latest patches and updates, as seen in Tom McDonald's Extended Play column. It's amazing how much Gaming Goodness we can squeeze into 650 megabytes!

Quick Start for The CD

1. Insert the CD.
2. If Autorun does not start the CD, click the Start button and choose Run. Type *X:\PCGAMER.EXE* where *X* is the letter of your CD-ROM drive.
3. This will run *The CD*.

System Requirements

Windows 95; 486/33; 4MB RAM; Mouse

NOTE: These requirements are for loading our front-end program only. Each game demo will have its own additional requirements, so be sure to read them carefully.

Attention Win3.1 Users

The *PC Gamer* front end was created for Windows 95. If you run Windows 3.1, you will have to install Win 3.1 demos separately.

Get Demos for Free!

Newsstand buyers have the choice of purchasing either the CD-ROM Edition of *PC Gamer* or *PC Gamer* without a CD-ROM. If you purchase the edition without a disc, you can still get free game demos in a couple of different ways:

1. Download demos and check out the IGN PC web site at *http://pc.ign.com* on the Internet. Our own *PC Gamer* Online is now back at *http://www.pcgamer.com.*

2. If you are currently subscribed to the non-disc version of *PC Gamer* and wish to receive the CD or would like information about purchasing a CD, please call (800) 898-7159. Operators are standing by Monday through Friday: 6am to 9pm MT, and Saturday/Sunday: 9am to 4pm MT.

Disc Editors' Note

For the latest information on the *PC Gamer* CD, be sure to check our web site at *http://www.pcgamer.com/cdrom.html*. You'll find our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and CD Updates at this location.

CONTENTS / MANUAL INSTALLATION COMMANDS

Installation Shortcuts

In the event our interface doesn't load or run properly on your machine, you can still install each demo, bypassing our front end altogether.

To manually install a demo, take a look at the Command Box located to the right. This box contains a list of demos along with their directories and installation commands.

To get up and running using the Command Box, simply use the Start-Run command for Windows 95, or the File-Run command from the Program Manager for Windows 3.1. When the dialog box appears, type in the letter of your CD-ROM drive, followed by the directory and install command listed at the right.

For example, to install the *Half-Life: Uplink* demo type *X:\HALFLIFE\HLUPLINK.EXE* where *X* is the letter of your CD-ROM drive, and press Enter. The setup program for *Half-Life: Uplink* will then run. You can also use the File Manager or Explorer to find the appropriate directory, and then double-click on the installation command.

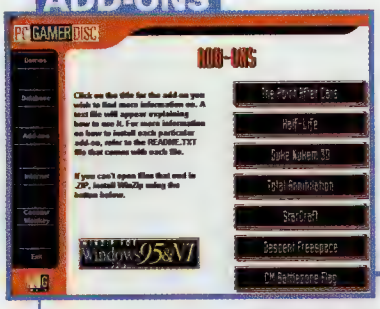
Please remember that if you're using Windows 3.1, you cannot run most Windows 95 demos or our front end.

A lovely * symbol means that that demo requires DirectX in order to run. You can install DirectX by running the DXSETUP.EXE file in the \DIRECTX directory on *The CD*.

Demo	Directory	Install Command	Page
Myth II: Soulblighter*	\MYTHDEMO	SETUP.EXE	10
Half-Life: Uplink*	\HALFLIFE	HLUPLINK.EXE	10
Close Combat III: The Russian Front*	\CC3DEMO	MSCC3.EXE	15
Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire*	\QFG5DEMO	SETUP.EXE	15
Commandos: Beyond the Call of Duty*	\CBCDDEMO	CBCDDEMO.EXE	16
Rollcage*	\ROLLCAGE	SETUP.EXE	16
Gangsters: Organized Crime*	\GANGDEMO	GANGSTERS.EXE	19
Imperialism 2: Age of Exploration*	\IMP2DEMO	SETUP.EXE	19
Redline*	\REDLINE	RLSPDEMO.EXE	20
Elite Darts*	\DARTDEMO	DARTDEMO.EXE	20
Sanctum: Bloodlines	\SANCTUM	SANCTUM.EXE	20
MindSpring	\MSPRING	SETUP.EXE	23
EarthLink	\EARTHL	SETUP.EXE	23
Patches	\PATCHES	—	168
DirectX 6.0	\DIRECTX	DX61ENG.EXE	
Add-ons	\ADDONS	—	
Having Problems?	—	—	23

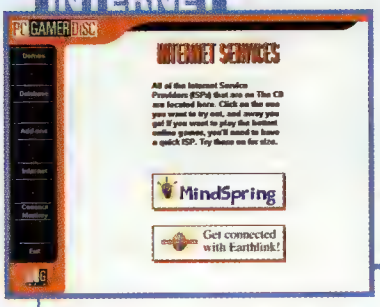
FINDING YOUR WAY AROUND

ADD-ONS



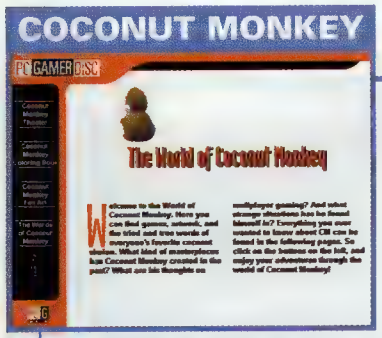
All the add-ons on *The CD* are located here, with instructions for use.

INTERNET



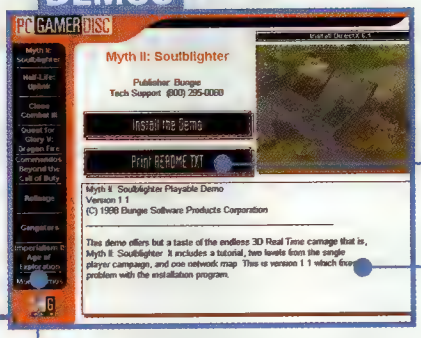
If you want to get online fast, this is the place to go. Get your Internet fix here!

COCONUT MONKEY



It's true! The bouncing monkey is back.

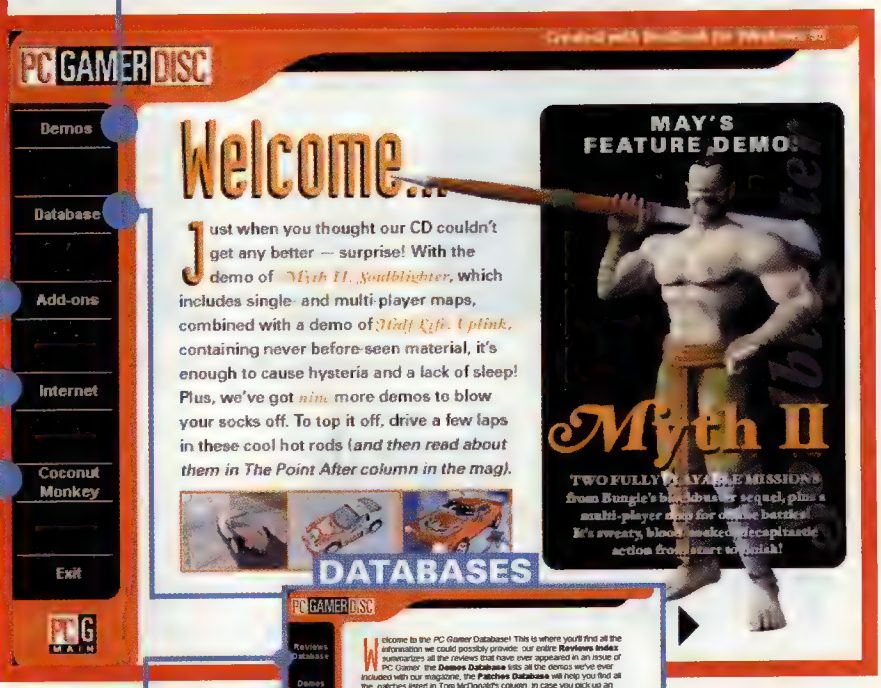
DEMOS



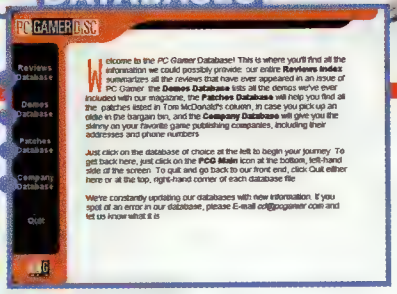
The menu screen lets you go to any demo at any time. To access demos not available on the opening screen, just click "More Demos."

The "Install the Demo" does just what you'd expect. Most demos come with README files that further explain gameplay. If you want a hard-copy of the game's README.TXT file, click "Print README.TXT."

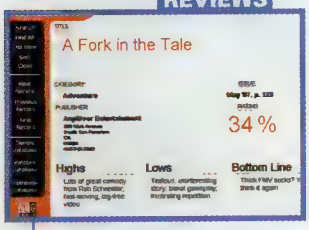
If you don't want to print the README.TXT file, you can scroll through this window and get detailed information on your selected demo.



DATABASES

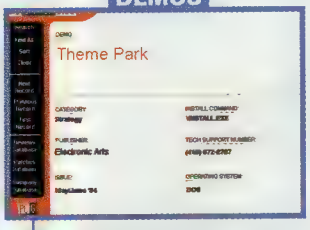


REVIEWS



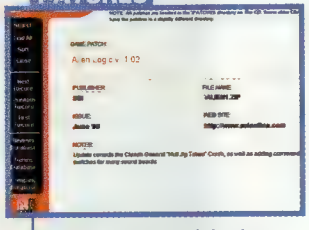
What rating did that game you found in the bargain bin get when it was new? The Reviews Database contains handy summaries of all the reviews we've ever published.

DEMOS



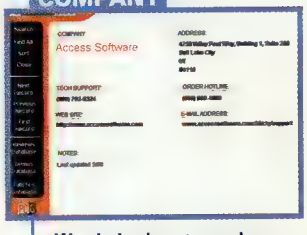
Which month's CD had that demo you've been meaning to try? The Demos Database tells you everything you need to know about demos that have appeared on *The CD*.

PATCHES



Looking for a patch for that ailing game? Check out our Patches Database, listing every fix and update we've covered in the Extended Play column and included on *The CD*.

COMPANY



Wondering how to reach a game's publisher? Here's the place to go. Whether you want their street address, tech support number, or web site address, we've got it all here.

Myth II: Soulblighter

INSTALL \MYTHDEMO\SETUP.EXE
TECH SUPPORT (800) 295-0060

CATEGORY: Strategy
COMPANY: Bungie Interactive
REQUIRED: Windows 95; Pentium 133; 32MB RAM; 107MB hard-drive space; DirectX

The sequel to last year's critically acclaimed real-time strategy game delivers even more hard-hitting, fast-paced fantasy combat than the original. This demo will walk you through a tutorial and two missions from the single-player game, and it even lets you play one map for multi-player battles to the death.

If you're familiar with real-time strategy games, you won't have any difficulty negotiating *Myth II*'s interface. To select your units, simply click them individually, or click and drag a box around the units you want to move as a group. If you've got a crowded mass of units, you can double-click a single unit to select all similar units in the area. Once selected, simply click where you want them to move or the creature you want them to attack. It's as simple as that!

The 3D terrain might take some getting used to. You can use the keyboard or the mouse to rotate your view and zoom in and out on the action. Make sure you know what's going on around you, or you might be in for some unpleasant surprises. Also, keep an eye on that radar in the top, right-hand corner of the screen — enemies appear as red dots, so you can quickly identify where they'll be coming from.

You can easily join in multi-player mayhem by signing up for Bungie.net — Bungie's free online service that will let you match up with players around the world. Simply point your browser at *www.bungie.net* and follow the links!



The tutorial will guide you through the basics of unit control. It's fun to blow things up with the dwarves. Try it and see!

WOLF'S TIP

We're sorry to say that everybody's favorite author of the Disc Pages, Billy, will no longer regale you with his infinite wisdom in his tips; he's too busy these days revamping our web site. Instead, here's a suggestion from Disc Editor Michael Wolf: Watch your dwarves carefully. They toss some pretty powerful explosives, and they're likely to blow up your own units. There's nothing like a Molotov cocktail to get you started on your day!

Half-Life: Uplink

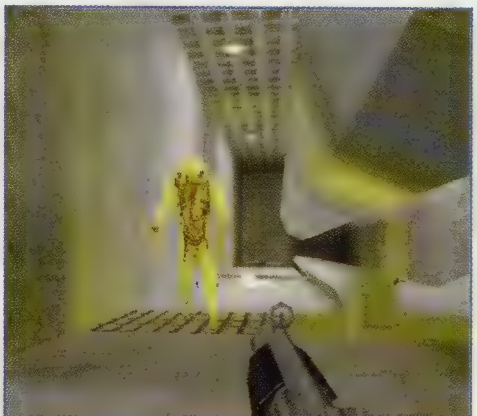
INSTALL \HALFLIFE\HLUPLINK.EXE
TECH SUPPORT (206) 644-4343

CATEGORY: Action
COMPANY: Sierra
REQUIRED: Windows 95; Pentium 133; 24MB RAM; 90MB hard-drive space; DirectX

All hell has broken loose. Creatures from who-knows-where have infested the research facility where you work — and the military, instead of helping, is coming in to kill any witnesses. Yes, it's *Half-Life*, but it's all new.

Uplink is a demo that contains material not seen in the full version of *Half-Life*. Your job is to help signal the all-clear (thereby opening the doors to the outside) by manually adjusting a radio transmitter. It's a job only somebody like you (in your hazardous environment suit) could do. You'll need to watch out for head-crabs, electrified aliens, and trigger-happy soldiers.

Check out the control keys for the basics. The mouse turns you, the keyboard moves you, and the mouse buttons fire your weapons' primary and secondary functions (or, if you like, you can customize the controls to suit your tastes). Keep an eye out for med stations and first-aid kits along the way — you'll most likely take plenty of damage. If your health goes to zero, you're toast. It helps if you break apart most crates you find — goodies are quite often hidden within them. However, you might want to save before smashing; sometimes jumping on those crates can help you reach an important area. Also, be sure to talk to the other characters in the game (those not shooting at you, that is). Just walk up to them and hit the E key to see what they have to say. Maybe you can get a guard to join you and help take out some of the bad guys. The extra firepower comes in quite handy, especially in this all-new demo.



There are some things you just don't want to meet in a darkened alley, especially this gangly fella.

CONTROL KEYS

Move Forward	W
Move Backward	S
Turn Left	A
Turn Right	D
Jump	Spacebar
Duck	Ctrl
Reload Weapon	R
Use Item	E
Flashlight	F
Last Used Weapon	Q
Quick Save	F6
Quick Load	F7



0-60 (off a skyscraper)? Yes.

Racers, start your mayhem. Grab hold of one of 10 wild vehicles and race through the windy streets of Chicago, where you'll have to deal with tough opponents, alleyways, drawbridges, newspaper racks, tunnels, and the police. Throw in five race modes and over 50 city landmarks, and there are plenty of sights to see. Just don't drive like a tourist.









See more action at
www.microsoft.com/games/midtown

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

msn Gaming ZONE
PLAY IT FREE ON ZONE.COM

angel studios

©1999 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved. Microsoft is a registered trademark of Microsoft Corporation. Volkswagen, the Volkswagen logo, and Beetle are copyright ©1999 Volkswagen of America, Inc. Trademarks, design patents and copyrights are used with the approval of the owner.

Microsoft


WIN $50,000!
CHECK OUT www.interplay.com/d3tournament.html FOR MORE INFORMATION.
CUNNING AGILE ROBOTS
From bold and brutal to cautious and shy, these virally infected robots use their brains as well as their bullets. Robots attack and defend in teams, summon backup help, retreat, hide and sometimes just sweep the floor.
FUSION ENGINE™
Descent 3's all new Fusion Engine blasts you seamlessly from inside to outside. Melding a flight-sim engine with a room-based, structural engine allows the action to race on at full speed, with no interruptions, indoors...and out.
INTROD
DUAL-ENGINE GA
Parallax Software
developed by Outrage entertainment
SoftwareForPCs.com
DESC
TURN YOUR WO
FOR MORE INFO, CAL
Descent 3: © 1999 Outrage Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. Outrage, the Outrage logo and Fusion Engine are trademarks of Outrage Entertainment, Inc. Descent, Interplay, the Inte



MERCILESS WEAPONS

From the Flame Thrower to the Black Shark, show no mercy as you crush enemies, set them on fire and watch them suffer.

BEST MULTIPLAYER OUT OF THE BOX

Descent 3 arrives fully optimized for Internet play over a modem. Remember the intuitive simplicity of Descent 1 and 2 network play? Now it's THAT EASY to battle hordes of Descent fanatics around the world.

TRUE RADIOSITY AND SPECULAR LIGHTING

Now you can lurk in the shadows and sneak up on your enemies. Specular and reflective surfaces allow for incredible special effects that portray Descent 3 in an all new light.

POLYGON ACCURATE COLLISION DETECTION

All objects have mass, velocity, moments of inertia, and other real-world properties. Blow off a robot's arm and watch it bounce off a wall and fall to the floor. Launch a missile and see your enemies rocked back from the blast impact.

UCING

ME TECHNOLOGY

E N T 3

RLD INSIDE OUT

1-800-INTERPLAY

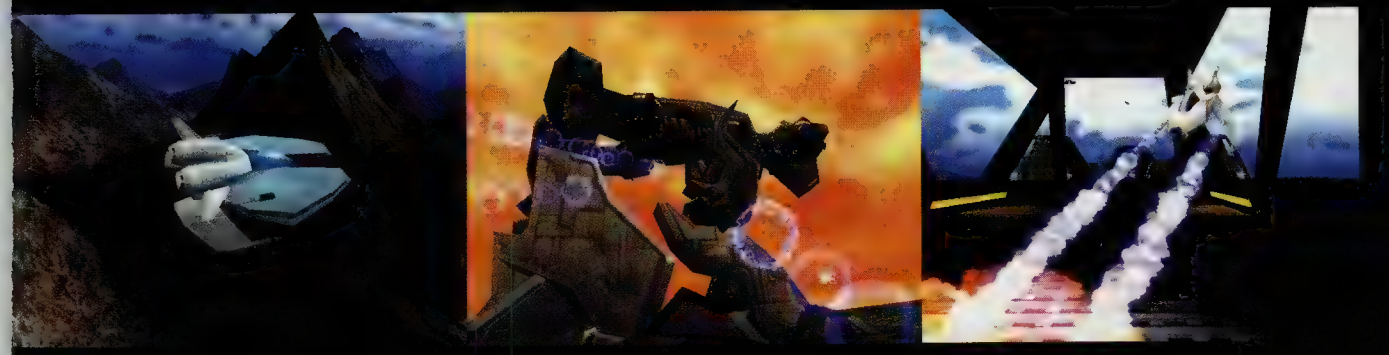
RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Tantrum

Interplay BY GAMERS. FOR GAMERS.

WWW.INTERPLAY.COM

play logo, Tantrum, the Tantrum logo, "By Gamers. For Gamers." are trademarks of Interplay Productions. All other copyrights and trademarks are the property of their respective owners.



Go to http://pcgamer.ign.com/request Product #325

FORGOTTEN REALMS

Baldur's Gate™

Tales of the Sword Coast™

Legends of treasures lost and monsters to be defeated abound in the region. Almost all have at least some basis in truth. Are you up to the task? Will you return with even more fame than you accumulated in your previous travels? Or will you journey off, never to be heard from again–the source of your *own* legend, in turn...?



Continue your adventures with the character you created in the original game.



Join up with new friends or meet old enemies.



More powerful spells, talkative NPCs, and additional enchanted items to be found.



Multiplayer support - up to 6 players via modem, LAN, or Internet.

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons

BioWARE CORP

Windows 95/98

www.interplay.com/bgtales

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Interplay BY GAMERS, FOR GAMERS

BLACK ISLE

Includes ROGER WILCO™ voice communication software to chat while playing!

BALDUR'S GATE: Tales of the Sword Coast: ©1999 BioWare Corp. All Rights Reserved. BioWare Infinity Engine ©1998 BioWare Corp. All Rights Reserved. Baldur's Gate, Baldur's Gate: Tales of the Sword Coast, Forgotten Realms, the Forgotten Realms logo, Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, the AD&D logo, TSR and the TSR logo are trademarks of TSR, Inc., a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc., and are used by Interplay under license. Black Isle Studios and the Black Isle Studios logo, Interplay, the Interplay logo, and "By Gamers. For Gamers." are trademarks of Interplay Productions. BioWare, the BioWare logo, and The BioWare Infinity Engine are trademarks of BioWare Corp. Exclusively licensed and distributed by Interplay Productions. All other trademarks and copyrights are property of their respective owners.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #329

Close Combat III: The Russian Front

INSTALL \CC3DEMO\MSCC3.EXE
TECH SUPPORT (206) 637-9308
CATEGORY: Strategy
COMPANY: Microsoft
REQUIRED: Windows 95; Pentium 133; 32MB RAM; 120MB hard-drive space; DirectX

1943. The Eastern Front. The Battle of Kursk in western Russia historically involved 4,000 aircraft, 6,000 tanks, and two million soldiers. Part of Germany's Operation: Citadel, it's now your job to make sure your troops make it through. Or, if you like, you can try your hand at swilling vodka with the Russkies and fighting off those annoying Germans. This demo will let you do either.

The Close Combat series of real-time wargames is unlike anything else going. With all the details of a turn-based strategy game, *Close Combat III* simulates the stress of the battlefield, and the quick thinking necessary to come out on top. When men are dying in the field, commanders don't have the luxury of stopping to figure out exactly how to position their troops. You have to see the situation, make the call, and hope your boys come home in one piece.

Commanding troops in the heat of battle, negotiating the maze of buildings, and protecting your troops from the devastating tank attacks takes some getting used to. We strongly suggest you start off with the Boot Camp tutorial before jumping into the Battle of Kursk. Your soldiers will thank you.



The five Boot Camp tutorial missions will take you through the basics of playing *Close Combat III*, but it's up to you to win the battle.



War is hell, especially for soldiers caught between a rock and a hard place.

Once you get the hang of things, you'll get to play with Assault Engineers, Shock Troops, Tiger Tanks, T-34s, rocket-launching half-tracks, and 120mm mortars during your conquest. Aside from playing the demo as commander of either side, you can even connect to Microsoft's MSN Gaming Zone at *www.zone.com* for some online play. Check out the site for more details.

Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire

INSTALL \QFG5DEMO\SETUP.EXE
TECH SUPPORT (206) 644-4343
CATEGORY: Adventure
COMPANY: Sierra
REQUIRED: Windows 95; Pentium 166; 32MB RAM; 70MB hard-drive space; DirectX

The beloved Quest for Glory series from Sierra has captivated gamers for years. Now, with its fifth incarnation, gamers can experience the wonderment of a mage's spells, the trickery of the nimble thief, the honor of the powerful paladin, or the strength of the mighty fighter. (In the demo, however, you can only try out the wizard and the fighter. Them's the rules.)

Your job — aside from staying alive — is to defeat first the guards, then the centaur wizard, and finally, the general. The island of Sifnos isn't large, but you might want to be sure to explore every nook and cranny for helpful items to further your cause.

You can play the game completely with the mouse, or use a few choice keyboard commands to speed up your progress. The I key will open your inventory screen, where you can outfit your hero, ready spells, and equip protective armor. You can easily get to the spells by pressing the S key, and the equipment screen comes up when you press the E key. To fight the enemies you'll face, simply click on the creature you wish to attack. Of course, it helps if you equip a weapon first. Spells work the same way — choose the spell, then click on the object you want to cast the spell on. Some spells require you to unequip your weapon — hit the E key to get to your equipment screen and drag the sword from the left side to the right side. You can equip your helm, shield, and amulet the same way — drag them from the right over to the left.



There's nothing like a few fireball spells to light up your evening.

WOLF'S TIP

That centaur magician is a tricky little bastard, but he's not as strong as you might think. Conserve health potions — then try taking him on hand-to-hand. He'll keep warping to the other side of the castle, but you can just keep chasing him down. Go easy on the spells; you'll want to save your mana and mana potions for the General. He's a toughie close up, but he doesn't have any ranged weapons, so you can plink at him until he's down by keeping your distance and casting spells.

The demo is over once you've killed the guards, mage, and general. When you've beaten it as the fighter, see if you can get through it as the wizard — or vice versa. You'll begin to understand why there are so many different ways to play through the full version of *Dragon Fire*.

Commandos: Beyond the Call of Duty

INSTALL \CBCDDEMO\CBCDDEMO.EXE
TECH SUPPORT (415) 547-1244

CATEGORY: Strategy
COMPANY: Eidos Interactive
REQUIRED: Windows 95; Pentium 133; 32MB RAM; 50MB hard-drive space; DirectX

World War Two wasn't all tanks and soldiers running across fields with guns blazing. There were also elite operatives working behind the lines — spying, assassinating, and destroying the enemy from within. *Commandos* puts you in charge of an elite team of fighting men whose sole duty is to themselves and the job they're hired to do. Whether it's killing an enemy general or gaining information on troop movements, these boys get it done.

The demo on *The CD* contains one full mission from *Beyond the Call of Duty*, a mission pack from Eidos for *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines*. Although you don't need the original game of *Commandos: Behind Enemy Lines* to play the demo, you will in order to play the full mission pack.

Your job is to rescue one of your own men, kidnap a German colonel, and stuff him into a tank for extraction. Sound easy? Far from it. You start off with a Green Beret, a sniper, a driver, and a jailed spy. You'll need to sneak, distract, assassinate, and avoid countless patrols in order to succeed in your mission. Just use your mouse to select the unit you want to maneuver, then left-click on the ground where you want him to move. You'll see a knapsack in the bottom right-hand corner of the screen when you select one of your men — each man has his own private collection of gadgets and weapons. To use something in particular, just click on the item you wish to use (like the sniper rifle); the icon in the game will change to reflect your choice, then you just click in on the object (or soldier) you want to use it on. Keep an eye on your characters' health — if any one of them dies, the mission is a failure. You might want to take a close look at the README.TXT file included with the game — there are several keyboard commands that will greatly speed up your play, which is essential when you have a squad of Nazis breathing down your neck.



Getting your men past armed patrols like this isn't easy; check out the README.TXT for tips.

WOLF'S TIP

Those Nazi nasties make things rather difficult for your fearless band of mercenaries. Make careful use of your sniper rifle, because ammo is limited. Also, be sure to use your Green Beret to pick up the dead bodies of guards and hide them from roving patrols. When all else fails, hide in a building — those Nazis aren't smart enough to open doors to search for murderous thugs like you.

Rollcage

INSTALL \ROLLCAGE\SETUP.EXE
TECH SUPPORT (650) 655-5683

CATEGORY: Racing
COMPANY: Psygnosis
REQUIRED: Windows 95; Pentium; 32MB RAM; 32MB hard-drive space; DirectX

Think you've played every possible variation of futuristic auto racing? Think again. *Rollcage* isn't your typical racer. In this one, you can pick up weapons, blast your enemies, destroy the terrain you race on, and even flip upside down and simply keep on going. Big wall in front of you? Don't worry about it — just keep driving, and you'll race up and onto its surface. It's racing like you've never seen before, and you'll need nerves of steel and a steady hand to keep on the track.

You can choose from two different cars in the demo: Jet's speedy, light racer, and Lenny's more bulky vehicle. Whichever one you choose, you'll need to pay attention to the track and the racers around you. As you fly down the track, you'll notice spinning objects in your path. Run over them, and you'll get a weapon to use against your opponents. Also, you can knock out supports for buildings and cause avalanches that will strike the cars behind you, so it's always a good idea to stay ahead of the pack if you can. The blue arrows on the track will give you a speed boost, but be careful — more speed means it's easier to lose control of your car and go spinning into a wall.

Take a look at the control keys listed here to get an idea of how you'll control your car. The demo doesn't require a 3D accelerator, but it sure looks pretty if you have one! The full version also contains multi-player racing for as many as six people, as well as a multitude of other racing options.



You can play from a third- or first-person perspective, but the first-person view will probably make you hurl. And that ain't good for your keyboard or your living room carpet.

CONTROL KEYS

Accelerate	↑
Turn Left	←
Turn Right	→
Reverse	↓
Brake	Spacebar
Target Opponent	0
Fire Weapon 1	1
Fire Weapon 2	2
Face Forward	A

TO SEE KILLER 3D, WHO SAYS YOU NEED 3D GLASSES?

INTRODUCING DELL'S *NEW* DESKTOP FEATURING THE PENTIUM® III PROCESSOR



With the new Intel® Pentium III processor at 500MHz, our new Dell® Dimension® XPS T500 represents a new generation of 3D technology. This system is designed to optimize the next wave of power-hungry apps and peripherals, like hyper-realistic gaming and digital cameras. Give us a call or visit our website. And we'll build you a piece of tomorrow, today.

NEW DELL® DIMENSION® XPS T500
PENTIUM® III PROCESSOR AT 500MHz
With Power Game Pack

- 128MB 100MHz SDRAM
- *NEW* 9.1GB[4] Ultra ATA Hard Drive (7200 RPM)
- 17" (16.0" viewable, .26dp) M780 Monitor
- 16MB Diamond Viper TNT 3D AGP Graphics Card
- 4.8X Max[10] Variable DVD-ROM Drive
- Turtle Beach Montego A3D 64V Sound Card
- harman/kardon HK-195 Speakers
- 3Com® USRobotics V.90[11] PCI Telephony WinModem with Trial Offer ConnectDirect℠ Internet Access[14]
- MS® Works Suite 99 with Money 99 Basic; McAfee VirusScan
- MS Windows® 98/MS IntelliMouse®
- Dell QuietKey® Keyboard
- 3-Year Limited Warranty[2]
- 1-Year Next-Business-Day At-home[3] Service

★ *Upgrade to ACS-295 Speakers with Subwoofer, add $50.*

$1999

Personal Lease[16]: $75/Mo., 36 Mos.[17]

E•VALUE CODE: 88824-500419g

USE THE POWER OF THE E•VALUE™ CODE.
MATCH OUR LATEST TECHNOLOGY WITH OUR LATEST PRICES. ENTER THE E•VALUE CODE ONLINE OR GIVE IT TO YOUR SALES REP OVER THE PHONE.
WWW.DELL.COM/EVALUE

TO ORDER TOLL-FREE

800-433-7307

BUILD YOUR OWN AND ORDER ONLINE

BE DIRECT™

DELL®

www.dell.com

intel inside
pentium® III

Are you Y2K OK? www.dell.com/y2k

Phone Hours: M-F 7a-11p • Sat-Sun 8a-8p CT • In Canada, call 800-839-0148 • In Mexico, call 001-800-210-7607

[16]Personal leasing arranged by Dell Financial Services L.P., an independent entity, to qualified customers. Amount of monthly lease payments above based on 36-month lease. All above monthly lease payments exclude taxes which may vary (for example, Hartford City, IN sales tax [17]$3.77/month). Shipping cost due with first payment. No security deposit required; subject to credit approval and availability. Lease terms subject to change without notice.

Pricing not discountable. [1]Prices and specifications valid in U.S. only and subject to change without notice. [2]For a complete copy of Limited Warranties and Guarantees, write Dell USA L.P., Attn: Warranties, One Dell Way, Round Rock, TX 78682. [3]At-home service provided via service contract between customer and third-party provider, and is not available in certain remote areas. Technician dispatched if necessary pursuant to phone-based troubleshooting with technical support personnel. [4]For hard drives, GB means 1 billion bytes; total accessible capacity varies depending on operating environment. [10]2X Min. [11]Download speeds limited to 53Kbps. Upload speeds are less (in the 30Kbps range) and vary by modem manufacturer. Speeds also vary depending on line conditions. Analog phone line and compatible server equipment required. [14]Offers differ for AT&T and for GTE Interactive. Some charges may apply. The Intel Inside logo and Pentium are registered trademarks of Intel Corporation. MS, Windows and IntelliMouse are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. 3Com is a registered trademark of 3Com Corporation.
©1999 Dell Computer Corporation. All rights reserved.

IN STORES NOW

MYTH II

SOULBLIGHTER™



"A mighty successor to a great game."
– Computer Gaming World, Editors' Choice
★★★★ 1/2

"Smarter, better-designed, and a true sequel, in every sense."
– Next Generation Online

"The editing tools give the game the endurance it so richly deserves."
– PC Games, "A" Rating

"Does a better job than any other RTS on the market."
– PC Accelerator

"Myth II is a textbook example of how to make a great game."
– Happy Puppy, 10 Rating

"Another great game... easily a must-buy for the Myth fan."
– GameCenter,
★★★★

"Myth II is about as good as a computer game can possibly be."

– GameSpot, 9.3 Rating

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #046

To get Myth II: Soulblighter head to your nearest reseller, call 1-800-295-0060, or visit us online at www.bungie.com.

BUNGIE

Myth II: Soulblighter is a trademark of Bungie Software Products Corporation. © 1998 Bungie Software Products Corporation. All rights reserved.

Gangsters: Organized Crime

INSTALL \GANGDEMO\GANGSTERS.EXE
TECH SUPPORT (415) 547-1244
CATEGORY: Strategy
COMPANY: Eidos Interactive
REQUIRED: Windows 95; Pentium 166; 32MB RAM; 92MB hard-drive space; DirectX

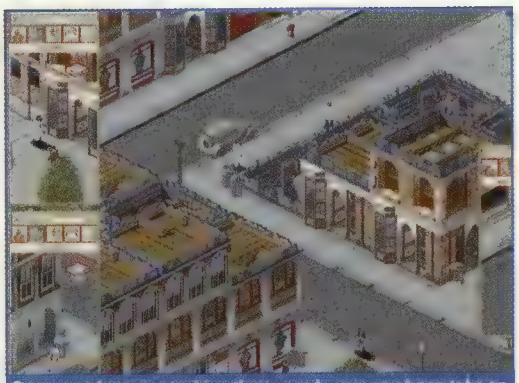
Ever dream of becoming the Godfather? Just think of it — legions of unsavory individuals attending to your every whim, commercial businessmen trembling in fear at your approach, and police officers looking the other way when you grease their palms with a little green. It's a wonderful life when you're on the good end of a Tommy gun!



Read the Overview and give your lieutenants orders before starting the week, or your boys will be sitting on their butts with nothing to do.

You can experience the pleasure of telling your morally deficient soldiers what to do in this five-week demo based in the not-so-aptly named town of New Temperance. We strongly suggest you give the Overview a good gander before loading up the demo — success depends greatly on the planning you do before heading into the work week, and it's best to go in prepared. The tutorials will also give you a taste of exactly what kind of situations you might find yourself in, so be sure to go over those as well before you jump right into the game.

The basic idea is simple — you tell your lieutenants what to do, whether it's extort some money out of local businesses, round up a few more bodies to push people around, or pull out all the stops and bomb or assassinate some of the opposition. Whatever you do, it's going to have some pretty significant repercussions, and you don't want to annoy the other crime leaders in your area too quickly (or the Feds, for that matter). Take your time, and the city will be yours. Of course, you only have five weeks to wreak as much havoc as you can, so don't be *too* conservative!

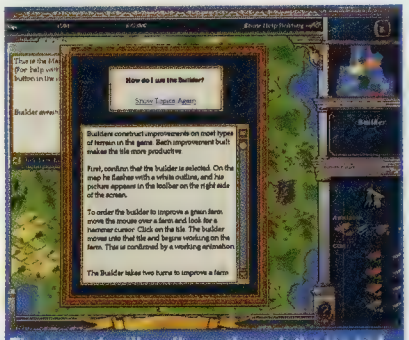


Once your boys are making their rounds, you can keep tabs on them with individual windows centered on their activities.

Imperialism II: Age of Exploration

INSTALL \IMP2DEMO\SETUP.EXE
TECH SUPPORT (415) 895-2000 x3
CATEGORY: Strategy
COMPANY: Mindscape
REQUIRED: Windows 95; Pentium 90; 16MB RAM; 80MB hard-drive space; DirectX

In the early days of exploration, the world was a bright, new place, with mysteries waiting to be uncovered. Return to the glory days of adventure, trade, and booming economies in the sequel to an underrated turn-based strategy game in the *Civilization* tradition. The demo contains the full tutorial from the game, so you'll experience trade, diplomacy, combat, industrial expansion, research, exploration, and empire building.



The tutorial will walk you through the ins and outs of colonization and conquest.

As in any good strategy god-game, you can win in myriad ways: conquer your enemies with sheer military might or coerce them with your diplomatic prowess. You begin in the early 1500s, and while the tutorial will end in the year 1650, that's 150 years of power at your fingertips. The tutorial walks you through the interface slowly, but you'll get a clear idea of what the full game includes by the time you're done. You'll need to learn how to balance a strong economy with a powerful military — and negotiate with the restless natives for mutual benefit.



As you expand your kingdom, you'll need to mine resources, improve farms, and build ports. This demo gives you 150 years to create your empire.

The full version of the game expands even farther, with no time limit and some strong artificial intelligence to compete against. Of course, there are also some multi-player options, so you can battle it out with your buddies for control of the New World. An imperialist's job is never done.

Redline

INSTALL \REDLINE\RLSPDEMO.EXE (single-player)
REDLINE.EXE (multi-player)
TECH SUPPORT (408) 296-8400
CATEGORY: Action
COMPANY: Accolade
REQUIRED: Windows 95; Pentium 200; 32MB RAM; 75MB hard-drive space; 3D accelerator (Direct3D and 3Dfx); DirectX

The year is 2066, and time hasn't been kind to old Mother Nature. The world is ruled by elite Insiders on the inside of protective domes — and by vicious gangs on the outside. Where do you fit in? You're an Outsider caught up in gang warfare, and it's your job to blow up anything that threatens to do you harm. Unlike most other first-person shooters, you can hunt down and destroy the enemy either on foot or from behind the wheel of a bitchin' vehicle complete with rocket launcher and side-mounted machine guns.

The single-player mission included on *The CD* (RLSPDEMO.EXE) contains two missions from the full game, while the separate multi-player demo (REDLINE.EXE) has two maps on which you can battle other players online. Check out the README.TXT file for instructions on setting up multi-player games.



Redline lets you drive heavily armed cars or shoot enemies on foot. Make use of the parking brake for a "Starsky & Hutch"-style turn.



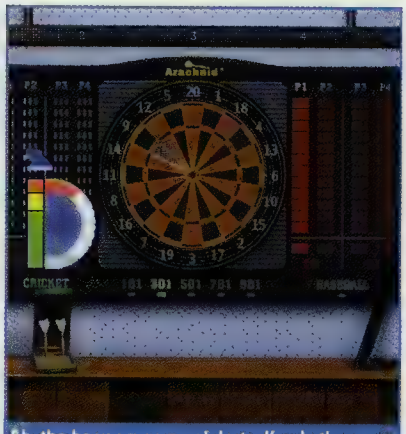
This ugly red mutha is the source of your problems, at least in the beginning. Kick his butt in the first mission, and you'll move on to the second.

Elite Darts

INSTALL \DARTDEMO\DARTDEMO.EXE
TECH SUPPORT www.patchproducts.com
CATEGORY: Sports
COMPANY: Patch Products
REQUIRED: Windows 95; Pentium 90; 32MB RAM; 22MB hard-drive space; DirectX

Ever miss the simple pleasure of tossing darts at a board while swilling an ice-cold beer? Have you been forbidden to play with real darts — perhaps by a court order? Now you can experience the fun via computer in this demo of one of the more popular barroom pastimes. The demo lets you play a game of 301 against the computer.

For a quick tutorial, press Control-U when you start the game. It will walk you through the basics, but it's pretty simple: You just move the transparent throwing-hand around the screen with the mouse. Hold down the left mouse button, and you can move your mouse forward and backward to move the hand. The speed at which you move the mouse determines the power of your throw. Move your mouse forward quickly and let go of the mouse button to toss the dart. With some practice, you'll get the hang of timing your throw and release to hit the target. If you click the left mouse button and then decide you're not in perfect position, you can smack the Tab key to get out of throwing mode and back in aiming mode.



Ah, the barroom game of darts. If only the game could simulate an ice-cold beer....

The game of 301 is rather simple — you start with 301 points, and your goal is to hit 0 points before the other drunk does. Throw the darts at the appropriate numbers to reduce your score. The first person to hit 0 wins — but you have to hit *exactly* 0, or you'll "bust" and you'll have to keep throwing.

Sanctum: Bloodlines

INSTALL \SANCTUM\SANCTUMSETUP.EXE
TECH SUPPORT help@digitaladdiction.com
CATEGORY: Card Adventure Game
COMPANY: Digital Addictions
REQUIRED: Windows 95; Pentium; 24MB RAM; 40MB hard-drive space; 800x600 resolution; TCP/IP Internet connection; Internet account

An exciting new game from Digital Addiction, *Sanctum* is a fantasy-themed card game similar to the mega-popular *Magic: The Gathering*. *Sanctum*, however, is comprised entirely of virtual cards that exist only on your PC, and you play it online.

To get to the fun, click on Create Account. This will take you to the Digital Addiction web site — you'll need to register an account, enter your E-mail address, and choose a user name, a house, and an Avatar. (Don't worry, it doesn't take long.) You begin with four minions and six novices in your Sanctum; the characters you receive are determined by what house you choose (the house of Death, Body, Life, etc.), but you're free to choose cards from other houses.

There are many more rules and playing tips, and a whole lot more information on card types (plus other cool stuff) at the Digital Addiction web site. Fire up that browser of yours and head on over to *www.digitaladdiction.com*. Read through all the information, and see why *Sanctum* could do for online gaming what *Magic: The Gathering* did for card games.

PLEASE NOTE: *Sanctum* requires an Internet connection, so you'll be responsible for any charges you incur while playing. This could include long-distance telephone fees.



When selecting your cards, be sure to get the right balance — no one likes surprise!



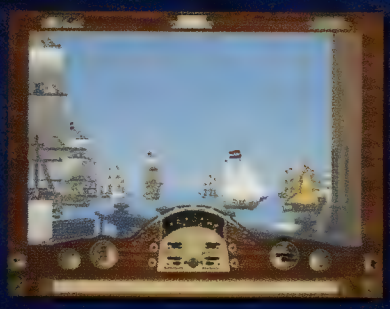
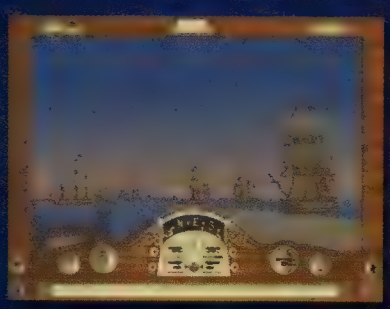
Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #188

Man of War II

Watch
HORATIO HORNBLOWER
Beginning Sunday, April 4th on
A&E

The order is given. Prepare for battle!

In the explosive tradition of Man of War comes the all new high seas combat of Man of War II. Take command as a Fleet Admiral, Division Commander or Ship's Captain and face the fury of a broadside, the terror of a boarding action and the thrill of a glorious victory in a dramatic real time first person perspective.


- Real Time Naval Warfare
- Multiple Levels of Command
- Character Creation & Development

SET SAIL FOR HIGH SEAS ADVENTURE!

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #319

Strategy First
www.strategyfirst.com

Distributed Exclusively by GT Interactive Software
www.gtinteractive.com



EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PC CD-ROM

©1999 Strategy First Inc. All rights reserved. Man of War II is a trademark of Strategy First. All rights reserved.All other trademarks and copyrights are the properties of their respective owners. ©1999 GT Interactive Software.

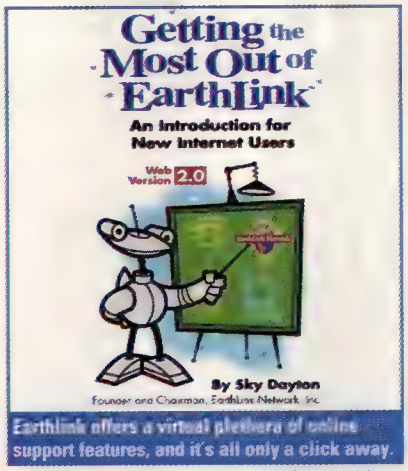
Earthlink

INSTALL \EARTHL\SETUP.EXE
TECH SUPPORT (800) 395-8410
CATEGORY: Online service
COMPANY: Earthlink
REQUIRED: 486; 8MB RAM; 15MB HD space; SVGA; Windows 3.1 or higher; 9600bps modem

EarthLink Network, winner of the 1997 *PC Magazine* Editors' Choice Award for Best Internet Service Provider, supports all kinds of Internet games and even has its own online gaming site (*www.thearena.com*). EarthLink membership includes unlimited Internet access, unlimited E-mail, a free 6MB of space for your own web site, a free subscription to *bLink*, EarthLink's newsletter, a fully customizable Personal Start page, and your choice of browser.

EarthLink is renowned for its 24/7, around the clock superior custom service and tech support, so if you find yourself with questions, rest assured that EarthLink will have a friendly representative standing by to help you out.

To get you started, EarthLink offers *PC Gamer* readers a 15-day free trial, plus free set-up (a savings of $25!). After that, you'll be billed $19.95 a month unless you cancel.



Earthlink offers a virtual plethora of online support features, and it's all only a click away.

Take that exceptional value, toss in bundles of local access numbers, and loads and loads of cool features, and Earthlink is presenting one opportunity that you can't afford to pass up.

So what are you waiting for? Fire up that modem, load up the goodies, and get ready to start surfing the Internet Earthlink style!

MindSpring

INSTALL \MSPRING\SETUP.EXE
TECH SUPPORT (800) 719-4660
CATEGORY: Online service
COMPANY: MindSpring
REQUIRED: 486; 8MB RAM; 25MB HD space; SVGA; Windows 3.1+; 14.4Kbps or faster modem

MindSpring will launch you on to the Internet with all sorts of goodies at your disposal — you can use E-mail, the World Wide Web, read Usenet newsgroups, and even gain access to free news, stock information, and web support.

The pricing is competitive, too: the Light service gives you five hours of service a month for $6.95 and $2 per each additional hour, along with 5MB of web space for your own web page. The Standard plan is $14.95 a month for 20 hours, with each additional hour costing one dollar. You also get 5MB of web space with this one. The Unlimited service gives you unlimited hours for $19.95 a month (without web space), while The Works service gives you unlimited hours, along with two extra E-mail boxes and ten megabytes of web space for $26.95 a month!

MindSpring uses its Pipeline+ software to give Windows 95 users a direct TCP/IP connection to the Internet, using the Microsoft Dial-Up Adapter. That means any of those online games that say they require a TCP/IP connection will work beautifully with MindSpring. If you use Windows 3.1, MindSpring uses Connect rather than the Dial-Up Adapter, which gives you a 16-bit TCP/IP connection, so you can still play those online games (as long as they don't require a 32-bit connection). For the online gamer, MindSpring offers all you need to start fragging your friends!

With its realistic pricing and a whole slew of services available, MindSpring is a good starting point for getting onto the Internet. Best of all, if you install the software from *The PC Gamer CD*, the $25 launching fee will be waived. Talk about service!

HAVING PROBLEMS?

We cannot provide technical support for problems you may encounter with demos on *The CD*. Please use the tech support numbers listed with the demos. You can also go to *http://www.pcgamer.com/cdrom.html* on the Internet for a FAQ and other info.

The CD is rigorously tested by the *PC Gamer* staff and certified virus-free. *PC Gamer* cannot be held responsible for any incompatibility problems caused by the use of *The CD*. However, should your copy fail to run, with error messages that indicate your CD drive cannot read the disc, return it to the following address: Customer Service, Imagine Media, The *PC Gamer* May 1999 Disc 4.11 Replacement, 150 North Hill Dr., Brisbane, CA 94005. Please indicate any error message you receive.

Reach Out and Frag Someone

Log on to

www.heat.net

to find out

what the phone lines

are really for

FAST FREE ONLINE GAMING
HEAT.NET

PLAY FOR KEEPS

© 1999 SegaSoft Networks, Inc. HEAT and HEAT.NET are trademarks of SegaSoft Networks, Inc. All rights reserved.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #747

OVER 2000 WAYS TO SHOW YOUR ENEMIES HOW MUCH YOU CARE.



Why limit yourself to a dozen, hell even a hundred, different weapon choices when you can have thousands?

It's time to remove the shackles of 2D, top down strategy games. Because in Warzone 2100, you have complete control over unit designs. As a result, it'll be your wits and ability to create an invincible battle arsenal that will save your hide from extinction.

REVOLUTIONARY UNIT DESIGN – 400 technologies allow you to design and build more than 2000 battle units. Turret, body and propulsion design options allow you to create anything from cyborgs to flamethrower tanks to V-TOL aircraft.

SUPERIOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE – recycle the experience of field units into bigger, better and even more fierce war machines. And as a Commander gains experience, the greater number of units he can control and the more accurate his laser designation becomes.

FULL 3D BATTLEFIELDS – lightning fast, fully functional 3D game engine with rotatable and zoomable cameras for fast and furious gaming action. Strategically placed radar units warn you of hidden enemy units and allow you to lob mortar shells over mountain obstructions.

IT'S NOW TIME TO TAKE YOUR FATE INTO YOUR OWN HANDS. SO GET INTO OUR VAST 3D WORLD

DESIGN, DEPLOY AND DESTROY.

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

EIDOSGAMES ON FREE INTERNET PLAY

DOWNLOAD THE SINGLE & MULTI-PLAYER DEMO AT:

www.eidosinteractive.com







Warzone 2100™ Pumpkin Studios 1998. © and Published by Eidos Interactive 1998. All Rights Reserved.



Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #195

GET READY TO COMMAND THE FUTURE



© 1999 Electronic Arts. Westwood Studios is a trademark or registered trademark of Electronic Arts in the U.S. and/or other countries. All rights reserved. Westwood Studios is an Electronic Arts™ company.

THE STUNNING SEQUEL TO THE

COMMAND & CONQUER® TIBERIAN SUN™

"THE CHAMPION IS BACK."

Computer Gaming World







COMING SUMMER '99

Westwood Studios

www.westwood.com

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #842

ORIGINAL COMMAND & CONQUER

TAKE CIVILIZATION® FARTHER...

4000 B.C. 3300 B.C. 2600 B.C.





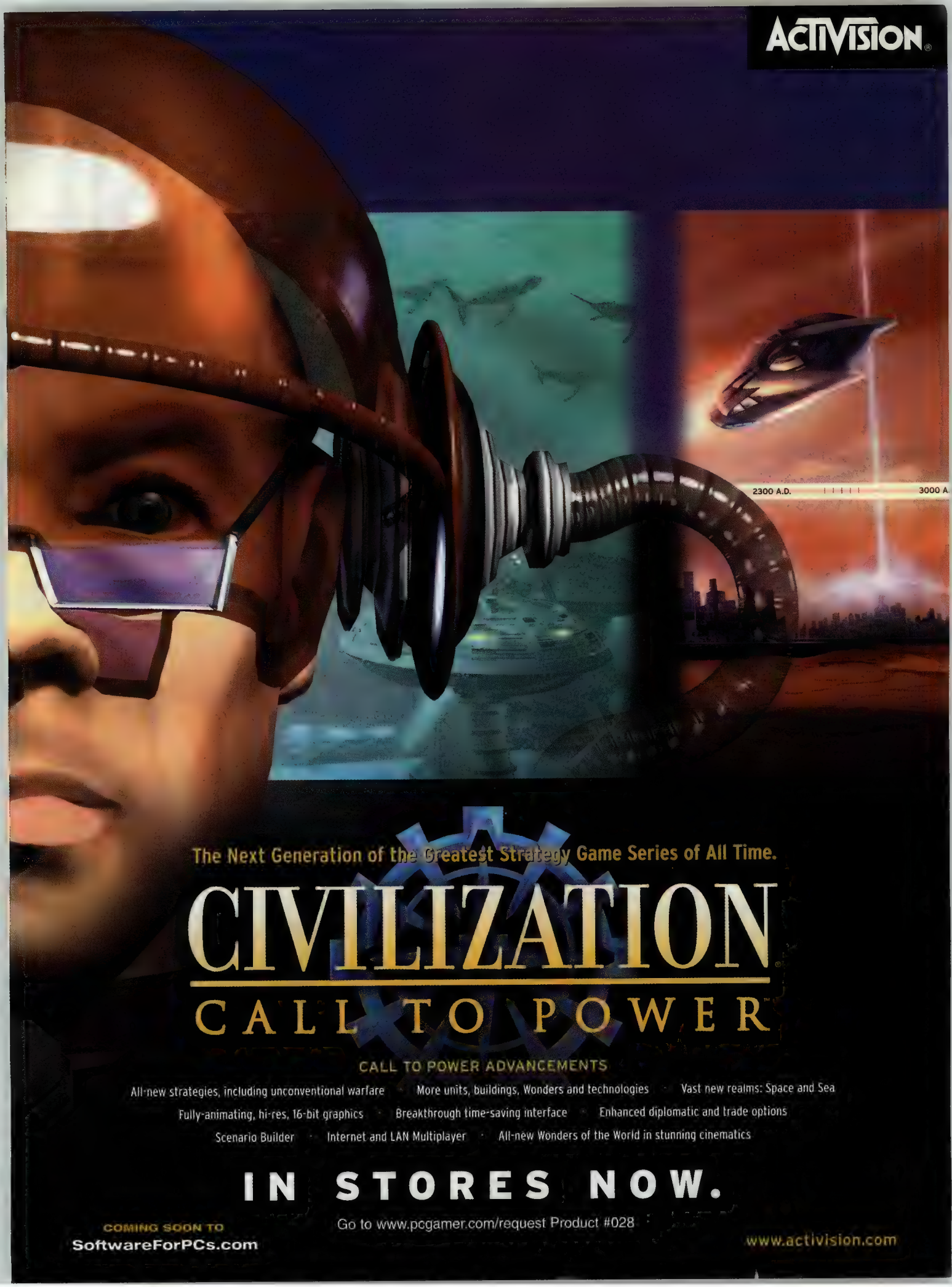
COMMAND, DEFEND, AND CONQUER

Command powerful armies and make every social, economic and political decision. Deploy over 65 beautifully-detailed units, 7000 years worth of weaponry, and over 100 technological advances.

COLONIZE THE PLANET AND BEYOND

Retrace the steps of mankind across the globe. Build orbital space colonies and add speed to your arsenal. Discover and harvest vast oceanic resources to grow immense underwater empires.

Civilization: Call To Power © 1999 Activision, Inc. Activision is a registered trademark and Call To Power is a trademark of Activision, Inc. CIVILIZATION computer games © 1991-1998 Hasbro Interactive and MicroProse, Inc. MICROPROSE and CIVILIZATION are U.S. registered trademarks and HASBRO INTERACTIVE, the HASBRO INTERACTIVE logo, and related marks are trademarks of Hasbro or its affiliates. MicroProse is a subsidiary of Hasbro or its affiliates. This product is made and sold under license from MicroProse. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and trade names are the property of their respective owners.


ACTIVISION
2300 A.D.
3000 A.
The Next Generation of the Greatest Strategy Game Series of All Time.
CIVILIZATION
CALL TO POWER
CALL TO POWER ADVANCEMENTS
All-new strategies, including unconventional warfare · More units, buildings, Wonders and technologies · Vast new realms: Space and Sea
Fully-animating, hi-res, 16-bit graphics · Breakthrough time-saving interface · Enhanced diplomatic and trade options
Scenario Builder · Internet and LAN Multiplayer · All-new Wonders of the World in stunning cinematics
IN STORES NOW.
COMING SOON TO
SoftwareForPCs.com
Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #028
www.activision.com

Prince of Persia 3D

Another 1980s gaming legend is back to conquer the 1990s!

One of the unquestioned classics of PC gaming undergoes a complete overhaul. Will it retain the distinct style of the original or be just another *Tomb Raider* wannabe?

—T. Liam McDonald



The Prince has a few combination attacks that allow the gamer to parry, thrust, and slash from different direction. Obviously, this is a thrust move.

FYI
FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Category: Action
Developer: Red Orb
Publisher: Mindscape, (415) 895-2000
www.mindscape.com
Percentage Complete: 60%

In a nutshell:

Prince of Persia 3D is a third-person action game based on the classic series and places the gamer in control of a running, jumping, fighting prince right out of the pages of the Arabian Nights.

What's so special?

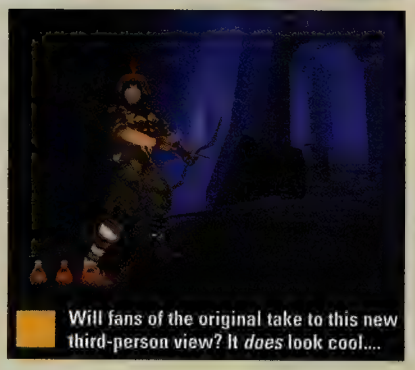
Jordan Mechner's original classic design changed the way action games were made. This newest incarnation is a radical reinvention of the series, moving from side-scrolling to 3D third-person while attempting to retain the spirit of the original.

And when's it coming out?

4th Quarter

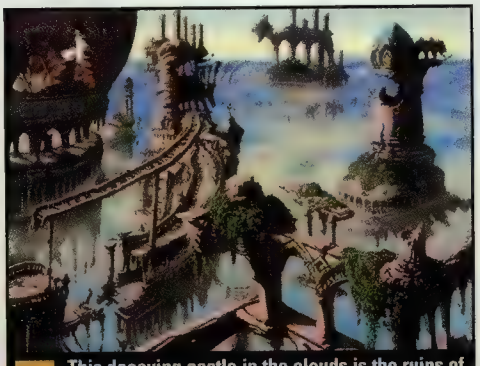
Prince of Persia is one of those rare games of such originality that it redefines a genre, in this case the side-scrolling action-adventure game. Few would question its place as one of the most influential designs in computer gaming history. Its meticulous rotoscoped figure animation, narrative drive, atmosphere, and devilishly challenging puzzle-like action elements set a standard that few games have matched in the ten years since its release. More astonishing is that all the art, programming, and design work was done by one man — Jordan Mechner. With the demise of the solo game auteur in the 1990s, such singular visionary work has all but vanished, but the influence of *Prince* continues to this day.

Considering its massive success (more than two million units sold worldwide) and name recognition, it's peculiar that *Prince of Persia* never really became a franchise. Broderbund and Mechner created a sequel in 1993 that was very similar in feel to the original, and it did reasonably well. But it would take another six years for Broderbund studio Red Orb (now a part of SSI, Mindscape, The Learning Company, Mattel, and the Daughters of the American Revolution for all I know) to produce another Prince game, and this one is not so much a sequel as a radical reinvention.



Will fans of the original take to this new third-person view? It *does* look cool....

Prince of Persia 3D follows the trend away from side-scrolling action games and toward 3D environments. In this case, the game will have a third



This decaying castle in the clouds is the ruins of the once great palace of the wizard Khacan, and is filled with bizarre creations and magic traps.

person "over the shoulder" perspective with a floating camera, resulting in something akin to *Tomb Raider*. Purist may well be horrified, since we have plenty of Lara Croft-alikes but almost no good side-scrollers. Designer Todd Kerpelman and producer Andrew Pedersen are aware of people's fondness for the original, and are working hard to retain its spirit while updating the design.

"When people hear what I'm working on," says Kerpelman, "they say, 'Don't mess with *Prince of Persia*. Keep it the way it was.' There's a lot of pressure. Whenever you do a sequel, there's the trick of keeping enough of the old to make it feel like a sequel and stay faithful to the original, while adding new stuff to make it current. Putting it in 3D has been very tough. Many of the puzzles of the original involved seeing a lot of levels at once. You had to see plates, traps, and all the other things. We have to think of each level in a very different way, since the gamer can only see what the Prince sees. We're walking a tricky line, but it's been a fun experience. It's gratifying to work on a game that people are already excited about before they even see it."

As of late, *Prince* creator Mechner has been concentrating on screenwriting, specifically a script called *Firebird* based upon his most recent game, *The Last Express*. "I helped the Red Orb team with the storyline," Mechner says, "and have been consulting all the way through. I've been giving them my design input. It's definitely a very different kind of challenge. The thing about a side-scroller is it has easy controls and you can see a larger part of the world at once. But with 3D, you just have a much better feeling of being in the game." Mechner intends to get back to game design at some point, but as for programming again, "there's just not that much demand for a 6504 coder anymore."

Mechner's role as a design consultant has helped steer the team onto the right path. "Jordan has come in a couple of times to help us make sure we're keeping to the *Prince of Persia* roots," says Kerpelman. "He helps us keep it simple where we might have gone for something much more complex. At one time, we were going the *Jedi Knight* route, with ten different weapons and spells. He was good about saying 'that's not right' and making sure we kept keystrokes to a minimum and control simple."

As the new game begins, we find the Prince being entertained by King Assan, the Sultan's jealous younger brother. Assan is angry because the Princess has already married the Prince, rather than Assan's deformed son Rugnor. In the middle of the entertainment, the belly dancers kill the bodyguards and capture the Prince, throwing him into a deep dungeon while the Princess is spirited away to Rugnor's mountain fortress. The Prince, naturally, must escape and save the Princess.

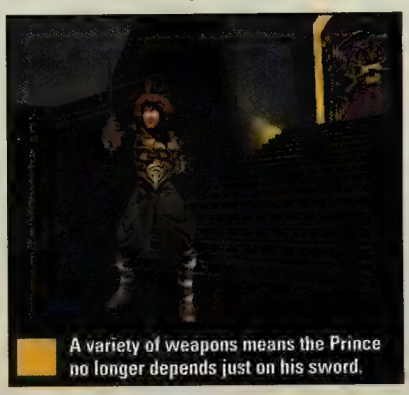
Mirroring the original game, the first level begins in the prison as the unarmed Prince escapes. These initial moments introduce the basic controls and movements, and ultimately lead to the Prince taking a sword from a dead guard. The Prince makes his way up the tower, through the palace and outside, and his adventures take him to a multi-level dirigible, the floating ruins of a wizard's castle, and eventually into Rugnor's fortress to rescue the Princess. The are fifteen levels in all, and the Prince has all the range of movement you'd expect to get him through; he can walk, run, jump, crawl, climb, push, and manipulate objects in order to proceed through the levels and kill the enemies.

The trick with *Prince of Persia 3D* is to strike precisely the right balance between action "puzzles" and combat. Too much combat, and the game loses the flavor of the original. Too little combat, and the game becomes *Mario*-esque. The allure of the original *Prince of Persia* was that you had to plan and use your brains rather than just blast away with a pair of guns, and Red Orb is trying to keep that feel. "Some of the combat is puzzle oriented, so it involves sneaking around and using other means to defeat enemies," says Kerpelman. "For instance, in the first level, before you get a weapon, you have to push a box onto a guard down below to kill him. There is a fair amount of combat, but I wouldn't call it a combat game — more like an action-adventure game with some combat in it."

" It's been a fun experience. It's gratifying to work on a game that people are already excited about before they even see it."

—TODD KERPELMAN, DESIGNER

The Prince has three weapons that he procures at different points in the game, and each has its own strengths and weaknesses. The main weapon is, of course, his trusty CONTINUED ON PAGE 33A



A variety of weapons means the Prince no longer depends just on his sword.



The giant dirigible that the Prince must battle his way through is a floating multi-level adventure in itself, complete with housing, engineers, and control rooms. The complex is filled with enough flammable fuel to make the Hindenberg look like a firecracker.

"Real Role Triumphant



Presenting the epic sequel to the top selling RPG of 1998. Might and Magic® VII features a new, enhanced 3D accelerated graphics engine, a new storyline with new adventures and quests, plus an innovative new-user "training ground."

Might and Magic VI Nominated for Computer Gaming World's "RPG of the Year."

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #790

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD PREMIER FINALIST 1999

Playing's Return."

-Computer Games Strategy Plus



Immerse yourself in the most addictive, most accessible RPG in the world. And discover what the critics are so excited about.

NEW WORLD COMPUTING®

3DO™

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PC CD-ROM

3Dfx

Environmental Audio™ by CREATIVE®

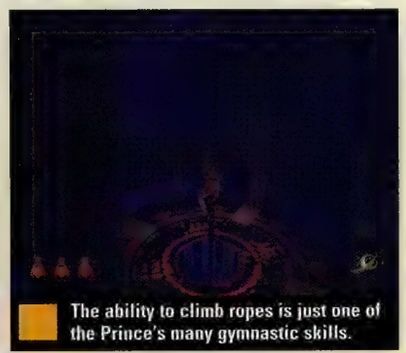
1.800.336.3506

www.mightandmagic.com

© 1999 The 3DO Company. All Rights Reserved. Might and Magic, For Blood and Honor, New World Computing, 3DO, and their respective logos, are trademarks and/or service marks of The 3DO Company in the U.S. and other countries. All other trademarks belong to their respective owners. New World Computing is a division of The 3DO Company. 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. is © 1998. The 3Dfx Interactive logo is a registered trademark of 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. in the USA and other countries. All Rights Reserved.

sword, which has moderate reach, damage, and striking speed. The Fighting Staff is a metal shaft that compresses for carrying. Fully opened, it provides greater reach for stand-off attacks and more damage than a sword, at the cost of reduced speed. The most lethal weapons are the Double Blades: short swords that wrap around the hands. You need to be much closer to attack, but you can attack with both blades at once, or use one to block and one to attack.

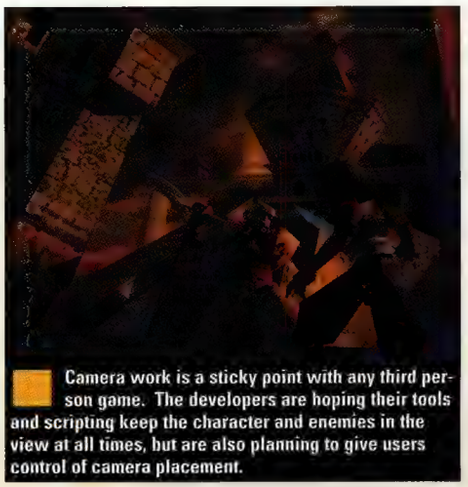
Rather than burdening the gamer with myriad key combinations, the designers have kept the controls fairly simple while providing enough variety to allow for some interesting moves. Each weapon has a block move, and a left, right, or overhead attack. When you engage an enemy in combat, the camera shifts to a distinct combat mode that gives you a good view of both the Prince and the opponent. The Prince can move within combat mode to side-step or press closer, though he can't jump or duck. Using fairly simple attack combinations, you can produce some interesting effects. With the staff, for instance, you can perform a "chained attack" that turns a left block into a right attack instantly. The double blades have a "super counter attack" in which you can block with one and attack with the other, or attack with each simultaneously. To make things even easier, the Prince auto-aligns with the opponent so you don't have to worry about maneuvering into position.



The ability to climb ropes is just one of the Prince's many gymnastic skills.

The Prince also has a bow that is intended not so much for combat encounters as for evening the odds against multiple opponents. The bow can be used to hit far-off targets, weakening a guard for an attack or activating buttons. The arrow supply is deliberately kept low to keep the game from degenerating into a shooting match. Some arrows are actually essential to solving the puzzles, and others provide special attacks for special situations. Fire arrows can be used to set guards on fire or detonate incendiary boxes. Distraction arrows set up a light or noise diversion to distract guards. The "arrow of possession" will enable you to take control of a guard for a limited amount of time. There will also be arrows to freeze guards and water, arrows that unleash swarms of wasps, arrows to produce blinding sandstorms, and more.

Aiming issues and combat in general — in fact any navigation through a third-person 3D game world — raises the question of camera controls. Wayward floating cameras with minds of their own can cause substantial grief in these environments, so Red Orb is working hard to test theirs and make them work. "Cameras are just one of those issues that will remain a problem for a long time," Kerpelman explains. "The camera has a setup of normal behaviors. Each situation has a camera angle set that we know works well. It has a prioritized list that it goes through to get the best angle, and it knows it's broken when the Prince is out of screen. With that in place, we then do manual tweaking at certain points to keep it from going spastically all over. The camera follows the Prince wherever he goes, and we also use a mix of stationary tripod cameras, security cameras, high angles, low angles, etc. We use camera cuts where they would help the level or provide important information. If the Prince comes to a cliff, for example, the camera will go high so he can see down below. There will be player camera controls if they want to move the angle, since we know gamers want that control. But we're working to make the camera move so flawlessly that the gamer won't feel the need to change the angle."



Camera work is a sticky point with any third person game. The developers are hoping their tools and scripting keep the character and enemies in the view at all times, but are also planning to give users control of camera placement.



Combat will not be a huge part of the game, but the Prince will have to fight his way out past several nasty foes. Your camera angle will switch during combat so you get a better view of the action.

The game is primarily being developed with two out-of-the-box tools. The Motion Factory's *Motivate* is being used as an authoring system for animation and playback, while NDL's Netimmerse is taking care of rendering and special effects. "Neither is a complete engine," says Kerpelman. "It's more like licensing a bunch of tools." These tools also help the programmers script camera movements. There are plenty of scripted animations to provide everything from reaction shots to idle actions if the gamer leaves the Prince in one place for too long. The team is particularly proud of the work it's doing on collision detection and alignment. The character's feet will adjust to the slope he's running on, and there are different animations for up and down slopes.

The trick will be combining the conventions of an action game with the expectations of a puzzle-type adventure to create something that successfully straddles both genres. It won't be easy: *Prince of Persia* purists will almost certainly not be pleased with the change in perspective, and kids looking for *Tomb Raider* might find the lack of cleavage and need for thinking too much of a strain. Red Orb certainly has its work cut out for it as it drags the Prince into the 21st century....

PCG

IN STORES NOW!

QUEST for GLORY V
DRAGON FIRE

MAC & PC

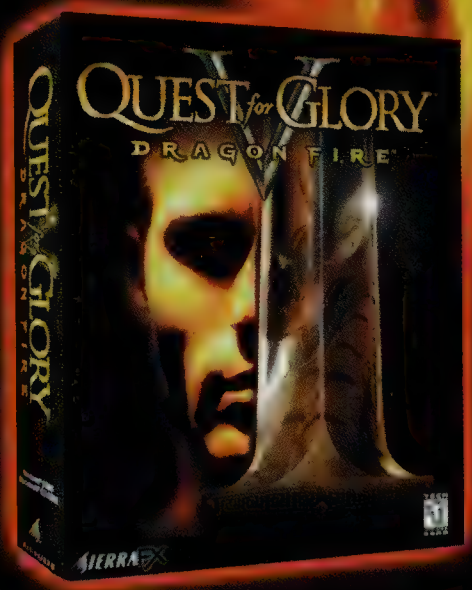


"A GRAND SLAM. THIS IS A SENSATIONAL GAME. DON'T MISS IT!"
–ANTAGONIST GAMES NETWORK

"94% RATING!"
"THIS GAME IS TRULY BRILLIANT"
–GAMEOVER

"FIRST RATE, IMMERSIVE, AND REPLAYABLE."
–HAPPY PUPPY.COM

"THIS GAME IS ONE OF MY FAVORITES OF THIS YEAR. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND IT!"
–REVIEWBOARD



PLAY THE DEMO!
WWW.SIERRAFX.COM

TO ORDER CALL:
1-800-757-7707

Developed by:
YOSEMITE Entertainment
SIERRA FX

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #741

©1999 Sierra On-Line, Inc. All rights reserved. ® and ™ designate trademarks of, or licensed to Sierra On-Line, Inc.


Might and Magic VII
FOR BLOOD AND HONOR


"Not just
the greatest
computer
game of
1998,
Starcraft is one
of the greatest
in the HISTORY
of the genre."
- Gerard Van Der Leun,
PENTHOUSE Magazine
BLIZZARD
ENTERTAINMENT
WWW.BLIZZARD.COM
Starcraft and Brood War are trademarks and Blizzard Entertainment is a registered trademark of Davidson and Associates. © 1998 Blizzard Entertainment. All Rights Reserved.

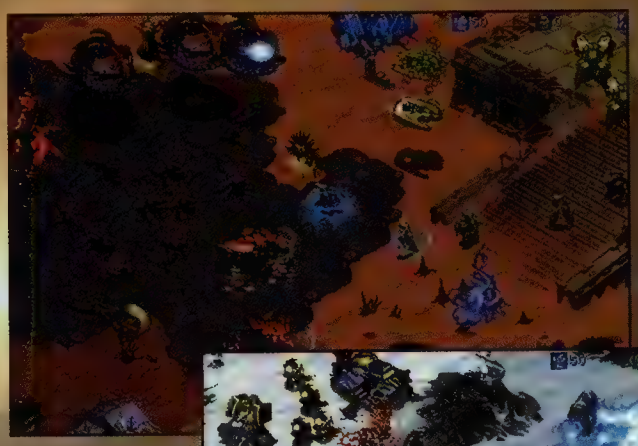
Expansion Set of the Year!

- Computer Gaming World, 1998

Expansion Set of the Year
- GameSpot, 1998

Expansion Set of the Year
- PC Accelerator, 1998

Editors Choice,
5 out of 5 stars
- Computer Gaming World, 1998







Command New Weapons of War

Call in Valkyries, Devourers, Dark Archons and more as you devise unique strategies to unleash the power of six all-new combat units.

Master 26 New Scenarios

Experience more explosive strategic combat in 26 all-new scenarios set within three epic campaigns.

Wage War in Over 100 New Battlefields

Launch intense multiplayer battles against up to eight human or computer opponents in over 100 all-new multiplayer maps.



StarCraft
EXPANSION SET
BROOD WAR™

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #114

MiG Alley

Jet-powered fighters clash for the first time — and you are there!

Korean War air combat has never been simulated at this level — or by a developer with this kind of track record. The result could be one of the best sims this year.

—Joel Durham Jr.

FYI
FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Category: Simulation
Developer: Rowan Interactive
Publisher: Empire Interactive, (800) 216-9706
www.empire-us.com
Percentage Complete: 95%

In a nutshell:

Flying in the face of the World War Two flight-sim boom, Rowan Interactive chose the Korean War as the setting for this cool-looking game. You can fly late prop-driven planes and early jet fighters in a dynamic campaign in which your actions directly affect the outcome of the war.

What's so special?

More than an air combat sim, *MiG Alley* also challenges you to plan air offensives to support the efforts of the UN ground troops. You can command the airborne effort on any level, from setting general directives to assigning each two-plane element to its own specific missions.

And when's it coming out?

Second Quarter, 1999

You can get a pretty accurate picture of the quality of an upcoming game from the enthusiasm displayed by its development team. The more the designers and programmers gush about their current project, the better the final product often turns out to be.

If that holds true for *MiG Alley*, this game will be a colossal achievement. Rob Hyde, managing director of the sim, excitedly gave us enough detail to write a book about his project, much less a two-page preview.

Fresh off the success of its critically acclaimed World War One sim, *Flying Corps*, Rowan Interactive was ready to tackle a flight sim of even greater proportions. *MiG Alley* has been generating buzz for quite some time now.

"We did interrupt *MiG Alley* to produce *Flying Corps Gold*," Hyde says. "Even so, *MiG Alley* has taken a while to get ready. Most people cannot understand why, and I can assure you it's not because we have been on holiday for weeks!"

MiG Alley focuses on the Spring, 1951, offensive of the Korean War. This period is especially interesting to flight sim enthusiasts, since it saw the last days of prop-driven dogfighting, the introduction of jets, and the first jet-vs-jet air battles. It's been featured in other flight sims, like *Sabre Ace* and *Chuck Yeager's Air Combat*, but the Korean War has never been simulated at the level ambition the *MiG Alley* developers have set as their target.

Even the game's graphics and visual effects suggest how detailed the sim will be. Hyde rattles off a list of features that should have any bona fide air combat fan drooling:

- Dynamic lighting on the aircraft and other objects — including explosions that light up the landscape.
- Instrument reflections on the cockpit canopy that vary with the direction of the sun.
- Cockpit shake to indicate stall and high-speed buffeting. Point-of-view changes to indicate G effects.
- Ground shadows that change as time passes.
- 3D bridges with individual spans; where individual spans collapse; for bridges with long spans, it's possible for a bridge to collapse in sections.
- Realistic condensation trails and rocket trails.
- Napalm.
- Blast damage (objects near an explosion may be damaged by the shock wave it produces).

"We hope to surprise people because we have accurately mapped the whole of the Korean peninsular area to a resolution of 10 meters," Hyde says. "The area covered is huge when compared with *Flying Corps*....We've also spent a lot of time increasing the realism of the landscape. So, for instance, you will find that the rivers are the correct width and that the bridges over the rivers are part of the landscape. The traditional way of doing bridges in sims has been to put a triangular ramp at the end of the bridge. In *MiG Alley*, you won't see any ramps."



Bridges are depicted with such detail that, depending on how they're hit, they may collapse into many sections.

The attention to detail isn't just cosmetic, though. It extends into the game's avionics — or what passed for avionics in the 1950s.

"We've modeled the radar and manual versions of the gun sight," Hyde says. "To work the gun sight, you control two dials displayed on the cockpit: dial in the wingspan of the aircraft you're targeting, and dial in the range that you want to attack the enemy aircraft. The gun sight then automatically adjusts to show where your bullets will be at the desired range."

Perhaps the most amazing aspect of *MiG Alley* is, appropriately, the most heavily advertised: the developers say



As in real life, flying into the sun is blinding — but if you keep the sun at your back, it can glint off enemy planes' metal skins and help you spot distant air targets.

the game engine is capable of animating — and intelligently controlling — more than 200 aircraft in the air at the same time.

So you'll need a water-cooled Cray supercomputer to run this game, right? Not according to Hyde.

"We're running the game on a range of machines," he says. "For instance, at the lower end, we have a Pentium 200 with a Voodoo2 card running at a very high frame rate. On the same machine, the game is perfectly acceptable with an earlier 3D card.

"We have a number of configurable options which have a huge effect on the frame-rate," Hyde says. "It's possible for the player to make the trade-off of speed versus quality choices. In fact, we have options in which the player chooses the minimum frame-rate; the game then automatically adjusts the image quality to exceed the target."

The folks at Rowan Interactive have been paying strict attention to dozens of less obvious details, too. Hyde cites a few examples:

"...1950s jet engines took a long time to get to full thrust, and so you don't get an immediate response if you bang the throttle from minimum to maximum," he says. "This is simulated in *MiG Alley*: however, you can choose to configure things so that you get an immediate response."

Historical authenticity rules in other areas of the game, too, including enemy tactics. Besides including a host of trademark MiG aerial maneuvers, the grand scheme of North Korean operations has a bearing on your airborne success.

"A MiG squadron will gradually learn better tactics," Hyde says. "After about a month — or sooner, if you've hammered them — a new squadron will arrive. In reality, there was no transfer of tactical information, so in the sim a new squadron will start from scratch. The observant player will be able to recognize a squadron change by looking at the color schemes."

Another little touch of realism: "Contrails are important in combat." U.S. Sabre jets tended to fly just below the altitude where condensation trails would form behind their jets, so that they could spot MiGs descending on them from a good distance.

MiG Alley is more than a flight sim, though. Besides flying a number of prop planes and jets, including Mustangs and Sabres, you'll also have the option to command air operations.

"*MiG Alley* has taken a while to get ready. Most people cannot understand why, and I can assure you it's not because we have been on holiday for weeks!"

— ROB HYDE, MANAGING DIRECTOR



Condensation trails are more than just pretty graphical effects. Knowing the altitude at which your plane leaves a trail — and flying below it — can help ensure you see the enemy before he sees you. It's just another little touch of realism that developers have been working on.



Before the days of heat-seeking and radar-guided missiles, unguided rockets could still be devastating in ground attacks.

The campaign game, simply called The Entire War, lets you select the amount of control you have over the allies' efforts.

"You're in command of 96 aircraft, and you can plan down to the level of an element (two aircraft)," Hyde says. "Alternatively, you can choose to let the computer plan the missions. You give it some overall directive, like telling it to concentrate on choke points, and it will select the juiciest target and allocate a sensible mix of strike and escort aircraft."

Whether you're playing the campaign or single missions, your tactical decisions influence the game. The ground troops are actually controlled by the game's artificial intelligence, and their efforts are as dynamic as any other aspect of the game.

"The aim of the game is to support the ground troops in their task of moving the front line up to the Chinese border," Hyde says. It's possible to support the ground troops in a number of ways:

- Close air support on the battlefield.
- Strafing truck and train convoys.
- Interdiction of the supply route.
- Providing protection from the Communist air forces (Combat Air Patrols).

"In the AI, we model the Red supply lines and decisions on attacking and retreating," Hyde says. "Based on the information that can be gleaned from the various sources available, the player must choose how to use his/her resources."

Hyde cites far more details and features than we could possibly include here. They all point to the same conclusion, though: With the kind of loving thoroughness Rowan is pouring into *MiG Alley*, this might not simply be the best Korean War sim — it might just turn out to be one of the best air combat sims yet.

PCG

THE SECOND PLACE CAR DOESN'T GET









EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PC

A TROPHY.
IT IS THE TROPHY.



The price you pay for losing isn't just pride. It's your 396 hp exotic. Watch for nasty hairpins. Aggressive opponents who might damage your baby. And, of course, the cops. They all want to see you lose it in a very big way.

NFS

NEED FOR SPEED™
HIGH STAKES

WWW.NEEDFORSPEED.COM

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #185

Sinistar Unleashed

"Run, coward, run!"

Developer GameFX takes the 1983 arcade classic *Sinistar* and polishes it up with a 3D sheen bustling with eye candy and raw intensity.

—Colin Williamson

FYI
FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Category: Action
Developer: GameFX
Publisher: THQ, Inc., (818) 225-5167
www.thq.com
Percentage Complete: 80%

In a nutshell:

Sinistar Unleashed is a 3D remake, 1990s style, of the arcade classic that gobbled so many of our quarters back in 1983. The original was one of the most difficult and fun arcade games of its time, and is still a cult favorite today.

What's so special?

With unspeakably frantic gameplay and eye candy to die for, *Sinistar Unleashed* could follow Activision's remarkable remake of *Battlezone* into gaming history — if GameFX can make good on everything it's promising.

And when's it coming out?

June



Ka-boom! Mining those planetoids by blowing them up will stock you up with crystals — just what you need to stick it to the big guy and his baddies.

Anyone who considers themselves a hard-core, old-school gamer will undoubtedly let out a mellow sigh at the bare mention of *Sinistar*. The 1983 title from Williams was one of the most relentlessly difficult arcade games ever — and is a huge cult favorite among vintage arcade collectors. *Sinistar* featured fast-scrolling backgrounds, countless swarms of enemy spaceships, and a terrifying "boss" named, well, Sinistar. But the most frightening part of the game was when Sinistar would unleash verbal taunts like "I hunger!", "Beware, I live!", and "Run, coward, run!" when he became operational. Sinistar would fly toward the player at top speed, and getting caught in his magnetic field would send you spiraling into his gaping maw, where he'd chew you up and laugh menacingly. But when you finally nuked Sinistar with your on-board armament, he'd explode with a hideous scream. It was great stuff.



Those enemy fighter ships may be hella tough, but not as tough as yours!

Now, with classics like *Battlezone* going under the 3D scalpel and being re-invented as top-quality games for the 1990s PC market, the core team at GameFX (including several designers who worked on *System Shock* and *Flight Unlimited* for Looking Glass) felt that a remake of *Sinistar* could be a classic. Publisher THQ acquired the rights

to the game, and GameFX began producing a title that would bring the frantic action of the original to a whole new generation of gamers.

Aware that the retro-gaming bug boomeranged badly when it came to Hasbro Interactive's appallingly bad *Frogger*, GameFX isn't aiming for just a straight recreation with 3D card support as the only improvement. "*Sinistar Unleashed* is a reinterpretation of the original game in 3D, not a direct recreation of the original game using today's graphics," says Mark Tsai, the game's producer. "Basically, all the aspects which made the original game such a cult hit are here — the fast-action crystal mining, the menacing voices, and the addictive gameplay."

In *Sinistar Unleashed*, your main goal is to mine crystals out of floating planetoids by shooting them a la *Asteroids*. Unfortunately, you'll have to compete with mining robots, who are attempting to create a Sinistar — the menacing super-weapon that will come to life and start kicking your ass all over the place. Making matters worse are the warrior robots who dart around you, trying to blast you into protons. No matter how hard you try, the workers will finish their labor of unspeakable evil, and the Sinistar comes to life in a horrifying display. The only chance you have is to send it back to hell by using all those Sinibombs that you (hopefully) mined out of the planetoids.

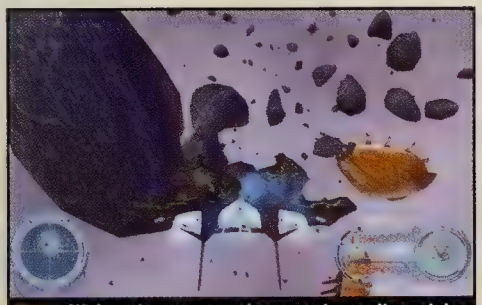
"It is very important to us that the voices are menacing, and they'll be an integral part of the gameplay."
— MARK TSAI, PRODUCER

In most space shooters, the player spends a large percentage of game time spinning about, trying to target a handful of enemies. However, *Sinistar Unleashed* features dozens of ships swarming around in the player's vicinity, and things can get pretty damn hectic. The GameFX team had to make sure that the game wouldn't overburden the player, and still maintain a high level of carnage. "The game is uniquely structured to take advantage of the differences offered by putting the game in 3D," says Tsai. "We've taken a lot of steps to maximize the player's viewpoint into the universe, only putting small displays in the corners of the screen for inventory management and local radar. While the game is running and the action is hot and heavy, the player can glean lots of information about his status and the state of the universe around him at a glance, minimizing the layers of interface between the player and the game."

Sinistar's extreme difficulty resulted in a lack of arcade popularity back in 1983, and only a few thousand arcade systems were ever sold. So GameFX is tweaking the difficulty level to allow new players to pick up the game relatively quickly. "We're spending a lot of time tuning the balance between the player's weapons and the enemy's armament and fighting abilities on the different skill level settings," says Tsai, "to insure that the graphics and eye candy that are built into the game will be accessible to any player, regardless of experience. The objective here is to provide a frenzied but manageable game."



Hey, I don't remember this guy from the original *Sinistar*! A bevy of new enemies will do battle with you in this game, along with this bug-like creature.



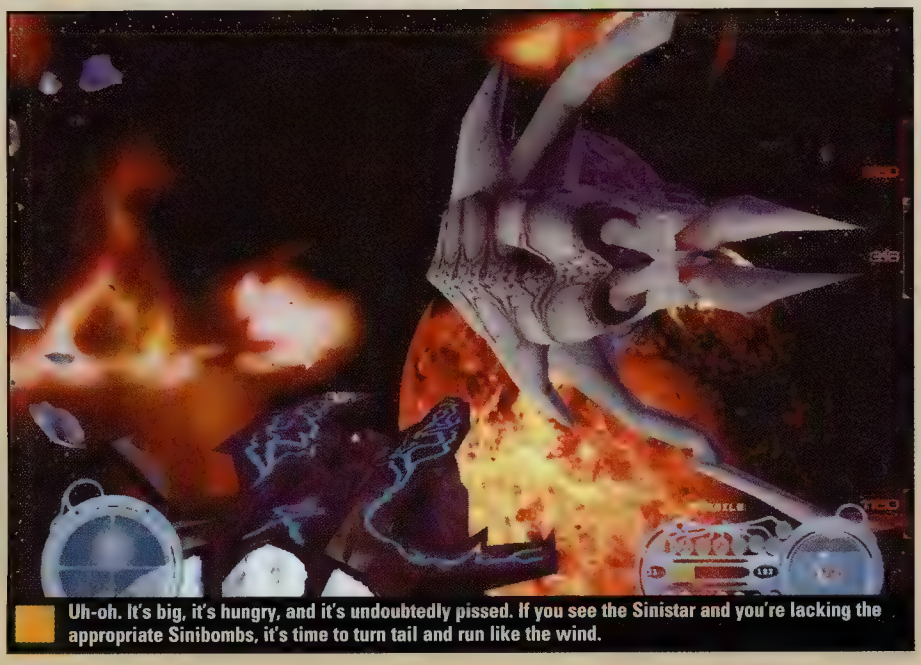
High-end system requirements have allowed the GameFX team to create highly detailed asteroid fields and stunning effects animation.

The original *Sinistar* also featured some remarkably detailed graphics and explosion effects — so *Sinistar Unleashed* will naturally include a hefty amount of 3D-accelerated pyrotechnic mayhem. The game has been GLIDE-optimized for maximum performance under 3Dfx chipsets, and includes Direct3D support for other cards. You're going to need a hefty base system to get this baby up and running, though. "The minimum system configuration will be a Pentium II at 233MHz with 32 megs of memory," says Tsai, "and it runs and plays great on this system. The game is specifically designed to take advantage of the latest hardware and will scale upwards in both resolutions and polygon count automatically, providing a better experience for those users with the faster equipment. It really looks amazing on a Pentium III 500."

But the biggest question from *Sinistar* fans is as to *who* is going to recreate the voice of the menacing Sinistar. "We are in full production of voices right now and we have not yet announced who will be the voice actor," says Tsai. "However, it is very important to us that the voices are menacing as well as informative, and they'll be an integral part of the gameplay. We're also trying a variety of audio approaches to generate the coolest Sinistar sounds."

But what do the original designers have to say about all this? *Sinistar* programmer Noah Falstein is still around and has been giving suggestions to the team. "Back in 1982, *Sinistar* was a labor of love for all of us involved in the project," says Falstein. "Seventeen years later, I still get comments from people about it. I'm really excited to see that GameFX is updating it for the new millennium. I look forward to a gaming feast — 'Beware, I hunger!'"

PCG



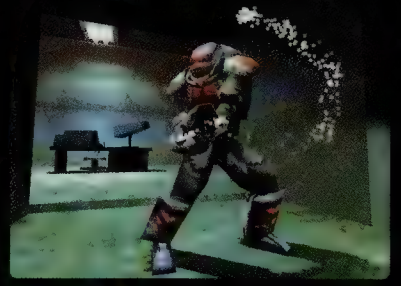
Uh-oh. It's big, it's hungry, and it's undoubtedly pissed. If you see the Sinistar and you're lacking the appropriate Sinibombs, it's time to turn tail and run like the wind.

Heaven and Hell Collide... This Spring

You're an angel.

Your name is "Malachi."

That's ancient Hebrew for "bad ass mother."



"Wonderfully Twisted."
Computer Games Strategy Plus



"The manna from heaven you've been waiting for...Requiem: Avenging Angel has the look of a winner."
Computer Gaming World



Environmental Audio™ by CREATIVE®

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

FREE INTERNET GAME PLAY · MPLAYER.COM · www.mplayer.com

COMPETE ON HEAT · HEAT.NET



Requiem: Avenging Angel™ immerses you in the ultimate battle between good and evil, with 3D first-person action so intense it transforms "fire and brimstone" into "fire and reload". Grab your high-powered weapons and blast through netherworlds and futuristic cities. Encounter bizarre characters from all over creation. Turn enemies to salt, boil their blood, then unleash a flesh-eating plague. Get *Requiem: Avenging Angel*. Because you're a messenger of God. With a high-caliber message.



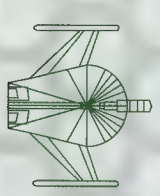
3DO™

www.requiempc.com

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #788

Finally, a starship naval combat game worthy of the name

Star Trek®



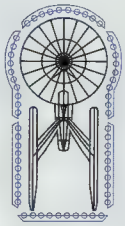
Romulan Battlehawk
Destroyer (R-BH)

4 Phaser 1s
2 Plasma Gs
2 Tractors
1 Transporter
Size Class: 4

Using data from the best-selling strategy board game, Star Fleet Battles™, Starfleet Command puts you in the captain's chair for the most amazing real-time space combat experience ever created.



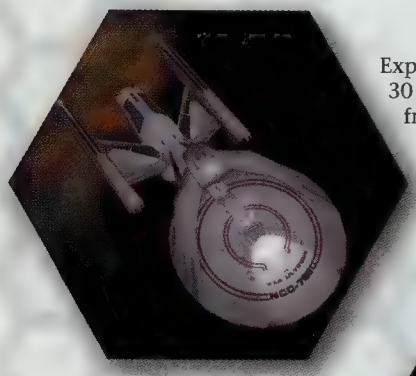
Dozens of multifunctional display panels offer instant access to every critical system. Weapons, Shields, Sensors, Transporters, Marines, Mines, Engineering, Science, and Energy Management.



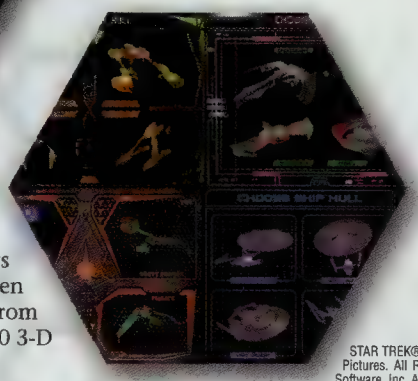
Federation
Heavy Cruiser (F-CA)

4 Photon Torpedoes
2 Phaser 1s
2 Tractors
3 Transporter
Size Class: 3





Experience a 30 year campaign that takes you from Lieutenant Commander of a Frigate to a Rear Admiral in control of a task force including Destroyers, Heavy Cruisers, and Dreadnoughts.



Every good tactician knows there's a fine balance between speed and raw power. Choose from four classes of ships and over 50 3-D rendered hull designs.

QUICKSILVER SOFTWARE, INC.

14° East

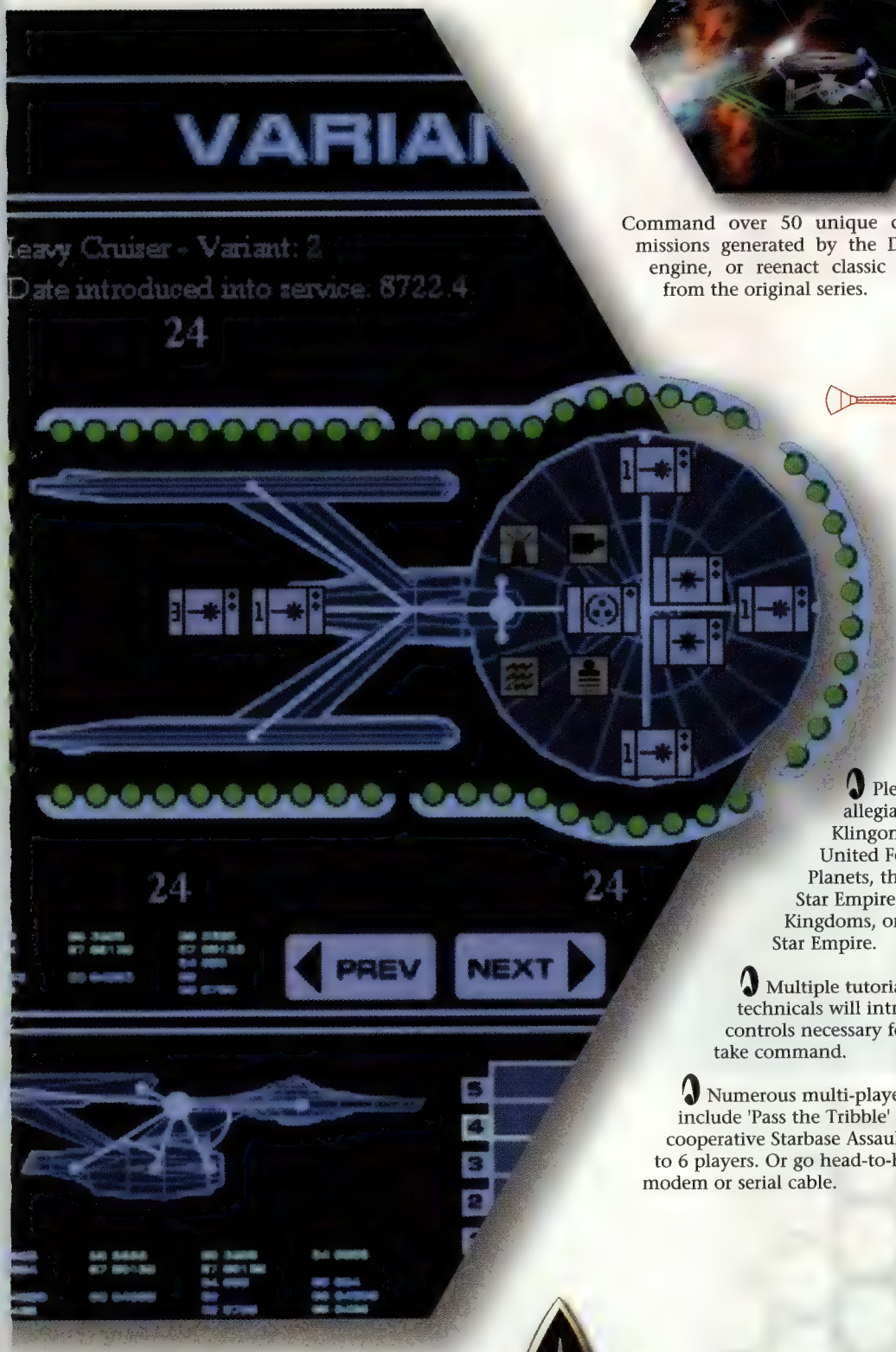
Interplay™
BY GAMERS. FOR GAMERS.™

Paramount
A VIACOM COMPANY

RP

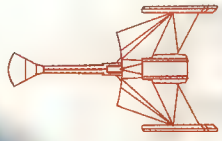
STAR TREK®: Starfleet Command™ Software ©1999 Interplay Productions. All Rights Reserved. ™, ® & © 1999 Paramount Pictures. All Rights Reserved. Portions ©1979-1999 Amarillo Design Bureau. All Rights Reserved. Portions © Quicksilver Software, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Some elements based upon the board games created by Amarillo Design Bureau. Star Trek is a registered trademark of Paramount Pictures and Starfleet Command and related marks are trademarks of Paramount Pictures. All Rights Reserved. Interplay, the Interplay logo, "By Gamers. For Gamers.", 14° East and the 14° East logo are trademarks of Interplay Productions. Quicksilver Software and the Quicksilver Software logo are trademarks of Quicksilver Software, Inc. Exclusively licensed and distributed by Interplay Productions. All other trademarks and copyrights are the property of their respective owners.

All shots are actual gameplay screens.





Command over 50 unique campaign missions generated by the Dynaverse engine, or reenact classic scenarios from the original series.



Klingon Command Cruiser (K-D7C)

4 Disruptors
3 Phaser 1s
6 Phaser 2s
3 Tractors
6 Transporter
Size Class: 3

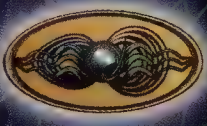
- Pledge allegiance in the Klingon Empire, the United Federation of Planets, the Romulan Star Empire, the Hydran Kingdoms, or the Lyran Star Empire.
- Multiple tutorials and technicals will introduce the controls necessary for you to take command.
- Numerous multi-player options include 'Pass the Tribble' and cooperative Starbase Assault with up to 6 players. Or go head-to-head via modem or serial cable.











STAR TREK®

STARFLEET COMMAND™

www.interplay.com/sfc

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #323

Shake up at Sierra

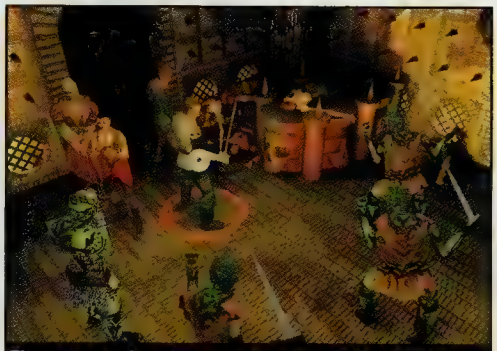
Major reorganization terminates employees and future projects

Hot on the heels of last month's *Football Pro '99* recall fiasco, Sierra has announced that it has reorganized and closed some of its development divisions, while laying off members of another. The decision will mean the closure of Yosemite Entertainment, Pyrotechnix, Inc., Synergistic, and Books That Work, Inc., and the release of some 30 employees from Dynamix. Of the 250 employees that were displaced by the closings, approximately one third of them have been offered the opportunity to relocate to Sierra's headquarters in Bellevue, WA.

David Grenewetzki, president of Sierra, said, "As we evolve into a mass market industry, we need to focus on the needs of the consumers. We feel that a more focused software strategy and a stronger commitment to the Internet and online gaming are key factors for our continued success. Integrating our teams to strengthen our brand and build on our online commitment is a strategic move that will help us continue our mission to develop and bring to market the most creative and most technologically advanced products that are fun, innovative, and provide a wide range of appeal."



After suffering the indignity of playing the game, members of the Football Pro Home Team were evicted; *Football Pro 2000* will not see the light of day.


There are no plans for any more games in the Krondor series (pictured above), but upcoming titles like *Homeworld* should be unaffected by the restructuring.

So how will this move affect gamers? The biggest blow comes to sports fans. After going through all of the trouble to establish what Sierra called its "Football Pro Home Team," the carpet was pulled out from under the feet of the loyal fans once again. Those that chose to keep their copies of *FB Pro '99* were led to believe that a new game (*FB Pro 2000*) would be released in time for the start of next football season, and that the customers would have a hand in developing the new game. But with the breakup of Synergistic, that game has been cancelled; fortunately the suckers, er, customers that decided to keep the game will be offered the same compensatory package that many have already taken advantage of (see our April issue for the full story).

According to Grenewetzki, "When I authorized the recall of the *Football Pro '99* product in January, the information at hand led me to believe that the product had been released too early and that a few more months in development would give us a game we could be proud of. Unfortunately, the schedule they outlined didn't give us a solid chance to have the right game for the 2000 release, even with the additional seven to eight months of development. Simple patching was not going to do it. Many fundamental changes to the underlying engine were needed, and there was significant risk associated with each major change. Given the deserved drubbing we took when we released *Football Pro '99* too early, I decided that I was not going to repeat that mistake with the release of an incomplete 2000 product."

Football Pro 2000 appears to be the only near-term project that will be affected by the reorganization, but many titles that were further down the pipe have been thrown on the scrap heap. As of

Continued on page 53:
***See* Shake up at Sierra**

The Sporting Life

Microsoft steps up its presence in the sports game arena



The teams in *Microsoft Football* will be programmed to act like their real-life counterpart, so you can expect to see the West Coast offense from the 49ers.

Microsoft has dabbled in the sports market for years, without much critical success. Its previous attempts at soccer and basketball were met with scorn and indifference respectively, its golf game has sold well but never matched the quality of the competition, and its baseball effort of last year had too many problems to rise above the pack. But times are changing, and when the monster from Redmond says it's finally getting serious about sports games, even the EA Sports of this world better take notice.

Gridiron gaming fans will get another choice this September, when *Microsoft Football* (working title) appears. This will be primarily an arcade game, but the company's hope is to make the action and results realistic enough to please the simulation crowd, too. A wide variety of offensive and defensive moves will be at the players' fingertips, including stiff-arms, shoulder charges, swim moves, and even the ability to intentionally grab the opponent's face mask. Microsoft says the artificial intelligence of the players will be modeled on a team-by-team basis, assuring that each team's playing style will accurately reflect what goes on in a real game. Based on the early look we've had, the graphics and aesthetic extras should compare with anything else out there. Dick Stockton and Matt Millen will call the games, trash-talking and team-specific chants will provide the atmosphere, and weather effects such as driving rain or snow will have a profound impact on the gameplay.



The artificial intelligence of *NBA Drive 2000* is being designed to try and deliver proper player positioning and spacing on the court.

This fall will see EA Sports' NBA Live series get a little competition as well, with *NBA Drive 2000*. The look and feel of the game is already well on its way toward matching EA Sports', with accurate player models, animated facial expressions, and professional announcers Kevin Calabro and Marques Johnson on board to call the action. Long-time NBA scout and player development coach Steve Gordon has been brought in to work on the AI. The development team claims that there will be an emphasis placed on maintaining proper spacing on the court, and the ability of the players to stick to their defensive assignments. As the coach of the team, you'll be able to select from a large assortment of plays on both offense and defense, with options for setting strategies.

The world's (if not the United States') most popular game will also get another attempt from Microsoft this fall. *World Championship Soccer 2000* (another working title) will cater to advanced gamers as well as novices with its optional one-touch control system. Many of England's top coaches and former player Glenn Roeder have been brought on board to add their insights to the game; correct positioning and strategies by the AI-controlled players should be the result of this collaboration. The visuals we've seen are spectacular and should give the all-conquering FIFA series a run for its money. *Soccer 2000* will contain nine modes of play, ranging from World Cup to League play, and will come with a huge assortment of teams, including all 64 Euro-Cup teams. Ruud Gullit, Jonathan Pearce, and "Big Fat" Ron Atkinson will provide the commentary.



The gorgeous graphics of *World Championship Soccer 2000* will allow for resolutions up to 1024x768, and the 200 different moves will contain 9,000 frames of animation.

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

AMA Superbike

The first game from Motorsport Simulations, a new startup developer aimed at providing hardcore racing titles, will be based on the American Motorcycle Association license. The game will feature a very true-to-life physics model, and all of the elements you would find in an AMA event, including blueprint-accurate tracks. The game will be available in both online and retail formats. If you buy the boxed version, you'll be able to race against as many as 30 computer opponents with adjustable AI; online buyers will have to settle for human competition via the company's web site (*www.motorsims.com*). *AMA Superbike* is scheduled for release sometime this spring.



The first game from Motorsport Simulations, *AMA Superbike*, will be based on the American Motorcycle Association license.

Rites of War

SSI's upcoming game will combine the *Panzer General 2* game engine with the Warhammer 40,000 universe. This turn-based strategy game will have some roleplaying elements as well, with units that can be upgraded as they gain experience. *Rites of War* will feature 12 spells, 24 artifacts, and more than 50 special abilities divided amongst 70 different unit types. A 24-mission campaign plus additional single and multi-player scenarios will be available, and the game can be played head-to-head or cooperatively. *Rites of War* will also come with a scenario editor when it's released this June.

Cutthroats: Terror on the High Seas

There's always room for another pirate game, and Eidos' *Cutthroats: Terror on the High Seas*

Continued on page 48

Continued from page 47

lets you assume the role of either a low-life sea-dog or a privateer in the service of the King; either way, the goal will be to stock up on the loot. The game will cover some six million miles of the Caribbean, with more than 70 ports for you to raid. Eidos says the world will be alive with hundreds of non-player ships all going about their business, and your actions early in the game may have profound consequences later. You can customize your ships and crew, and battles will be waged on both land and sea. Look for *Cutthroats* this summer.



The seas are vast, but your greed for gold is even greater. Become the Terror of the Caribbean in Eidos' upcoming *Cutthroats: Terror on the High Seas*.

Railroad Tycoon II: The Second Century

Rail barons looking for their next big challenge are in luck; PopTop Software, the developer of *Railroad Tycoon II*, is designing an expansion pack for its outstanding strategy game. The add-on will contain an 18-scenario campaign, stretching from the post-Depression years of the 1930s through the year 2030. New maps for solo and multiplay, trains, industries, music and video are promised, and *The Second Century* should be available sometime this spring.

Ultimate 8-Ball

If you enjoy the game of billiards, but hate having to frequent the seedy establishments in your neighborhood to get in a game, your worries are over, thanks to THQ's *Ultimate 8-Ball*. The game will feature 14 different game types (8-Ball, 9-Ball, Straight Pool, Cut Throat, etc.), 15 3D opponents with varying

Continued on page 49a

Come Blow Your Horn

Strategy First signs "Hornblower" pact with the A&E Network

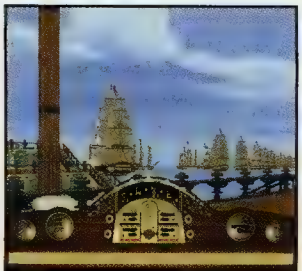
Later this spring, the Arts and Entertainment Network intends to serialize C.S. Forrester's "Horatio Hornblower" novels in one of the most lavish and spectacular literary adaptations ever to run on television — and the TV series has formed an unprecedented synergy with the release of the age-of-sail wargame *Man-o-War 2*, from Montreal-based Strategy First.

The A&E Network took a look at Strategy First's game, Strategy First took a look at some of the rushes from the TV show, and representatives of both companies were awed at what they saw. The result? A great marketing strategy: the game will be advertised on the show, and the expected popularity of the series should jump-start the game's reputation.

Man-o-War 2 boasts a bevy of improvements over its predecessor, including vastly enhanced graphics and brutally realistic sounds, including the spine-tingling screams of the wounded below decks as they undergo the era's most common treatment for combat wounds: amputation without anesthesia. The game's campaign culminates with a massive, warts-and-all simulation of the Battle of Trafalgar. Strategy First has pulled out all the stops for this one.



You'll be able to choose which side, the British or French, you want to fight for in Strategy First's *Man-o-War 2*.



Some of the larger battles portrayed in *Man-o-War 2* will see the oceans filled with cannon-firing ships.

However lucrative the arrangement between the A&E network and the gaming company turns out to be, it's a landmark in the history of the industry; this project is going to make an impact. The accepted (and overhyped) paradigm between games and Hollywood films just might have to be re-thought, and that's probably a healthy development. So hoist the mizzen-luft, me hearties, and double load the carronades with chain-shot! We'll show those Frenchies that Britannia truly rules the waves! Unless, of course, you choose to play the French, in which case you have plenty of chances to change history.

Man-o-War 2, and its synergistic relationship to the Hornblower TV series, is almost certainly going to change the public's perception of computer gaming. For the better, let's hope.



The combining of *Man-o-War 2*, the game, and "Horation Hornblower", the television series on the A&E network, should prove favorable for both endeavors; we'd like to see more of this kind of synergy.



Since the turtle was the only animate object in this race, the winner should have been a foregone conclusion; the toaster put on a fine showing, though, leaving Dusty's PC in the, er, dust.

We Have a Winner!

A creative reader snags the prize in our Alienware contest

Back in our December 1998 issue, Alienware sponsored a contest giving away one of its very cool, very expensive Area 51 gaming systems, including a rump-rocking Intensor chair, monster-sized monitor, wall-shaking speakers, and a top-notch joystick. To win this ultimate rig, we asked you to send in pictures of your current gaming system looking its most pitiful. We received thousands of entries, and with so many needy readers, choosing a winner was one of the most painful decisions the *PC Gamer* editors have ever had to make.

After choking back tears at having to look at such a motley collection of miserable hardware, we narrowed it down to four finalists and took a vote. Our lucky winner was the amusingly monikered Dusty Howze of Hanford, California! Dusty's pictures of his pitifully slow computer losing a race to both a turtle and a toaster (the turtle won handily) got a chuckle from even the most hardened editors.

The other finalists also deserve special mention (and our deepest sympathy). Rex Taylor of Vero Beach, Florida, went all out with his pictures, dressing up like a caveman sitting next to his pre-historic system; Julie Nicoll of Ludlow, Vermont, put some real effort into her pictures by shooting, smashing, and setting her system on fire; and Shane Boggan of Salem, Oregon, had some great special effects in his picture, using some dry ice and a hatchet. Even though we only had one super-cool system to give away, we thought these finalists deserved a little something (psychiatric treatment, perhaps), so we awarded them each a brand-new Coconut Monkey/*PC Gamer* T-shirt!

Jolly well done, all of you.

The Runners-Up









Continued from page 48

skills, 15 table types (including weird L-shaped and hexagonal models), 10 different environments and five modes of play. THQ says that the physics model will be very accurate, and that any type of shot you can pull off in real life will be possible on these virtual tables. We'll see if the game has what it takes to topple Interplay's *Virtual Pool 2* when it releases this June.



You won't find a table like this down at your local watering hole! You'll only find it in *Ultimate 8-Ball* from THQ.

F-22 Lightning III

The next game in the F-22 Lightning series from NovaLogic is scheduled for a May release. The new game will feature improved graphics, and a new voice communication system called Voice-Over-Net for multiplay on the company's NovaWorld game service. This hands-free system should make things much easier for the more than 120 players that can compete at once on the server. Other improvements to be found in *F-22 Lightning III* will be new avionics, nuclear weapons delivery systems, and more than 40 single-player missions. Weather and time of day will play a large factor in this sim, too; concentrated areas of wind, snow, and rain, and varying temperatures will force the player to adjust to the changing conditions.

F16: Aggressor

Bethesda Softworks has picked up the rights to publish General Simulations Inc.'s *F16: Aggressor*, a new flight sim that will be available sometime during the second quarter of this year. Newcomers to the flight sim category will be treated to a comprehensive

Continued on page 50

More Nazi Bashin'!

WWII meets Rainbow Six *in TalonSoft's latest*

Whenever a groundbreaking game establishes a new sub-genre, it doesn't take long for that genre to grow as software companies bring their me-too entries to market. The current hot genre is the tactical-action commando game, as symbolized by the likes of *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six, Spec Ops*, and *Delta Force*, and the latest entry in this compelling arena is from none other than wargame specialist TalonSoft.

As well as belonging to the genre du jour, *Hidden and Dangerous* scores extra style points by being set during World War Two, which is currently enjoying a gaming renaissance. The player is put in control of a small commando team inserted behind enemy lines and boasting incredible graphics that put many of its genre competitors to shame. *Hidden & Dangerous* is made up of 25 missions set in locations such as Norway, Germany, and Italy. Things start off in 1943 and carry on through the end of the war in 1945. Everything in the game, from the weapons to the vehicles, is based on the real McCoy, and you'll be able to interact with many of them, including driving the vehicles you come across. There'll even be force feedback support to simulate the recoil of the weapons.



All of the motion-captured characters in *Hidden and Dangerous* will exhibit different animations, based on where they were hit and how wounded they are.



The "Insanity" engine used to power the graphics does a great job creating realistic-looking outdoor environments.

The story line and mission objectives will be based on actual events as related by real World War Two veterans — including some stories that are not widely known, so there should be a lot of surprises in store, even for gamers who think they've seen it all before. As in *Rainbow Six*, you'll control your squad via first or third-person views, and you'll also have an overhead map to plan out your strategy — and of course there will be a four-player cooperative mode, too, if you would rather have your friends along as squadmates.

This current trend of commando-style games is becoming a little overwhelming, but from what we've seen in the early version of *Hidden and Dangerous* we've played, this one could stand head and shoulders above the rest when it hits store shelves this July.

A Force to be Reckoned With

A new 3D tactical wargame from Red Storm

In Red Storm Entertainment's upcoming game *Force 21*, the world has become a much more dangerous place — it's the year 2015, and the U.S. and Russia are teaming up to take on the Chinese in a Third World War. It seems the Chinese have run out of resources, and they figured the best way to remedy the problem would be to invade neighboring Russia. Of course, the Russkies don't take very kindly to this uninvited guest, and the mayhem begins. *Force 21* will challenge you to deal with various elements of warfare, including action, operations, and strategy.

The war will take place on a 3D battlefield, with each side controlling as many as 16 platoons filled with helicopters, tanks, artillery, combat engineers, and electronic units. In all, there will be more than 40 different combat vehicles for you to command through 30 single-player missions and ten multi-player maps, which will accommodate both cooperative and deathmatch play for as many as four players. As the battle rages on, you'll need to conduct reconnaissance, launch air assaults, lay minefields, and detonate buildings in order to gain the upper hand.



Force 21 will give you more than 40 vehicles to control as you try and win the Third World War.

Force 21 will also come with a map and mission editor.

Authentic situations and terrain are *Force 21*'s goals, and to ensure the former, General Frederick M. Franks, Jr., a former US Army Corps commander during Operation Desert Storm, has been brought in to impart his knowledge and experience.

"Whereas a game like *Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six* put players in the role of a special counter-terrorist operative, we'll show them what it will feel like to be a company commander in the heat of battle," says Franks. "They will have to deal with all the elements of battle to include the human dimension of war that soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and officers have to bring together to win at that intense and tough level of mounted combat."

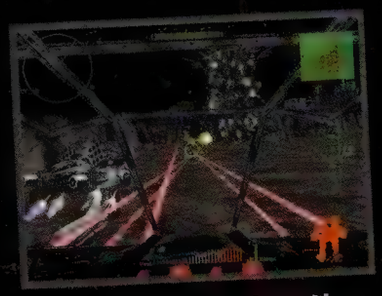
Force 21 is scheduled for release this July.




MECHWARRIOR3
DOWNLOAD
PLAYABLE
DEMO
www.mechwarrior3.com

"MechWarrior 3 features enough eye-popping action to make you think your monitor is in danger of exploding."

-Johnny L. Wilson Computer Gaming World



"...the game's animation is better than anything I've seen."

-George Jones CNET Gamecenter.com

HAVOC BEGINS MAY 1999

RP

FASA CORPORATION

ZIPPER INTERACTIVE

©1999 Hasbro Interactive, Inc. All Rights Reserved. MICROPROSE is a trademark of Hasbro or its affiliated companies. *MechWarrior* and 'Mech are trademarks of FASA Corporation. Used under license. All other trademarks are the property of their respective holders.

HASBRO Interactive

MICROPROSE

www.microprose.com

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #506

Continued from page 49a

tutorial covering all of the basics, while experienced pilots will be able to hop right into any of the campaigns that take place over Africa. The 40-plus missions will cover areas such as Madagascar, The Rift Valley, Morocco, and Ethiopia. There will be plenty of enemy planes and helicopters to fight, but the missions will also force you to contend with land-based obstacles such as tanks and surface to air installations. As a multi-role fighter, you'll also be expected to engage in a little bombing action, so be prepared to lay waste to ground targets like buildings, boats, roads, animals, and people. Multi-player support will be included and allows for both deathmatch and cooperative play via LAN or the Internet.



Forget about baseball and football — everyone knows the subject that every computer sports gamer wanted to see tackled was a bull riding sim!

Professional Bull Rider

The new (bizarre) direction of Sierra Sports continues apace with the announcement of three exclusive licensing agreements from the world of Professional Bull Riding. The first game out of the shoot will be *Professional Bull Rider*, and will feature many top cowboys from the licensed Professional Bull Riders, Inc., including Ty Murray and Tuff Hedeman, the two other exclusive licenses that Sierra has inked. There's no word yet on gameplay features or a release date for the game, so all you PC-owning bull riding fans will just have to be patient.

Baldur's Gate: Tales of the Sword Coast

All of the slavering roleplaying

Continued on page 52



You start off your career in *Flash Point* with only a sniper rifle; if successful, you can move up to an A-10 Warthog. Oh, yeah, baby!



Things can go hopelessly wrong if you allow the enemy planes to get close enough to fire on your zeppelin in *Dawn of Aces 1.3*.

I-Magic Tricks

A handful of new games coming your way soon

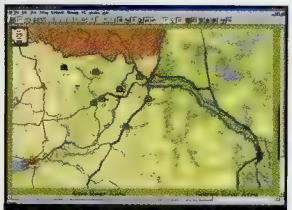
Interactive Magic founder Bill Stealey boldly predicted that his company would achieve the ever-elusive goal of profitability in 1999. Here's what the company has on tap in the upcoming months that has him so confident.

Road to Moscow is a wargame that will try to do things a bit differently than they've been done in the past. Using a system called 'Interruptible Continuous Time', this hybrid method for giving orders is aimed at eliminating the boring aspects of turn-based games (primarily, waiting for the other players to take their turns) while cutting down on the frenzied clicking of the real-time genre.

The two campaigns and 12 scenarios are set in the Eastern Front of World War Two. The player will literally control millions of troops, giving *Road to Moscow* a feel unlike many traditional style war games; what the developer is shooting for is more of a military simulation on a very grand scale. The artificial intelligence is also being talked up by I-Magic; the company says the AI will "learn by doing," meaning the computer will adjust its thinking and improve the more it experiences and is exposed to winning strategies. Look for *Road to Moscow* this spring.

For the online-only crowd comes *ShockForce* and *Dawn of Aces 1.3*. *ShockForce* is a game of battling hovertanks that will let as many as 64 players bash on each other in team play, similar to Sierra's hit game, *Starsiege: Tribes*. As squads are formed, they will be given access to a "radio channel," which allows for team-centric communication. At press time, the game is in open beta testing with tentative plans for a late spring/early summer release.

Dawn of Aces 1.3 is an update of I-Magic's successful online World War One flight simulation. The new version will include new aircraft, a better gunner interface, and the ability to load bombs and variable fuel loads on your aircraft. The most exciting addition, though, will be the user-flyable zeppelins. Perfect for high-altitude bombing, the zeppelins will also accommodate seven gunner positions for defense. Check out I-Magic's website at *www.imagicgames.com* for more information on these two games.



Road to Moscow uses NATO military symbols to let you control troops across the Eastern Front.

A combination real-time strategy and action game, *Flash Point* casts the player as a super-soldier in the latter stages of World War Three. The two warring sides have worn each other out (and have also done a bang up job of nearly destroying the planet in the process), and now you must use your soldierly skills to tip the balance over to your side. As you successfully complete missions, your rank will improve, as will your skills and responsibilities; tougher missions will be assigned and better weapons and vehicles will be available. Eventually, you'll have access to more than 20 vehicles, and the action can be fought out in first or third-person views. An overhead view will also be available for strategic planning. *Flash Point*'s multi-player aspect will allow for head-to-head play via LAN, Internet, or modem when the game is released this June.

Finally, Interactive Magic will be releasing a new business simulation this fall by the name of *Wall Street Tycoon*. Not many details have been released on this one as of yet, but if you've always wanted to be a Bull or a Bear, you can look forward to testing your Stock Market mettle without losing your shirt in the process.

The New *PC Gamer Online*

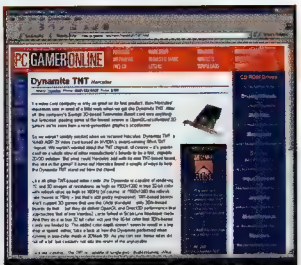
The best place on the web for your daily gaming fix

Last year, *PC Gamer Online* took one for the team and transferred much of its daily content to our sister web site, *IGN-PC*. Now that *IGN-PC* is well established, *PC Gamer Online* is back and better than ever, with a completely new design and a new attitude that will quickly elevate our beloved little online destination into the best gaming web site out there. We know what you're saying — "You guys were already the best!" Well, just wait until you lay your peepers on the re-design!

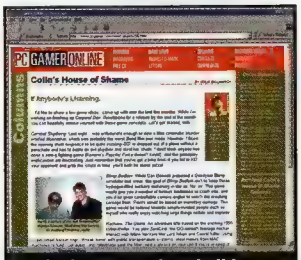
We've returned to our previous format of providing online previews, news that matters to gamers, and demos for the hottest games around. We're also expanding our Level Paradise area to include *Total Annihilation*, *Myth*, and a host of other killer games. Not everything's going to change, though; we'll still be bringing you your daily dose of gaming wit and wisdom via our columns by the likes of Editor-in-Chief Gary Whitta, everyone's favorite whipping boy Colin Williamson, and resident freak Billy Harms.

And the fun doesn't stop there! We've archived the Hard Stuff online, so you'll be able to access every review, complete and uncut, that has appeared in the Hard Stuff section of the magazine. And our game reviews are getting the same treatment as well (although this will take a little longer since more than one thousand reviews have appeared in our magazine and our pudgy fingers can only type so fast.)

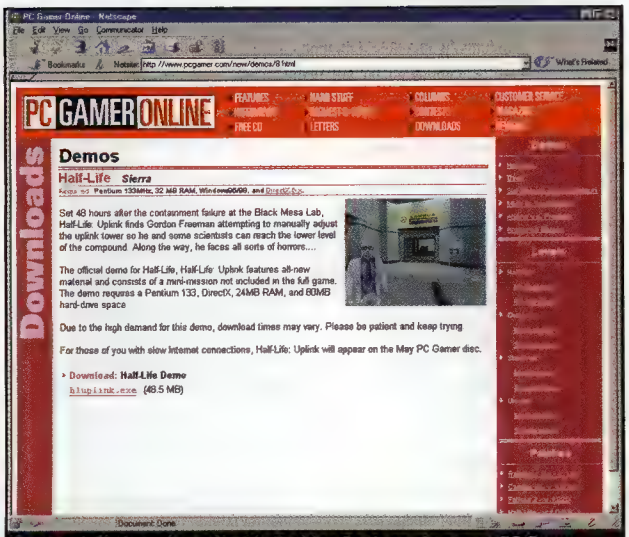
So head on over to *www.pcgamer.com* and check us out.



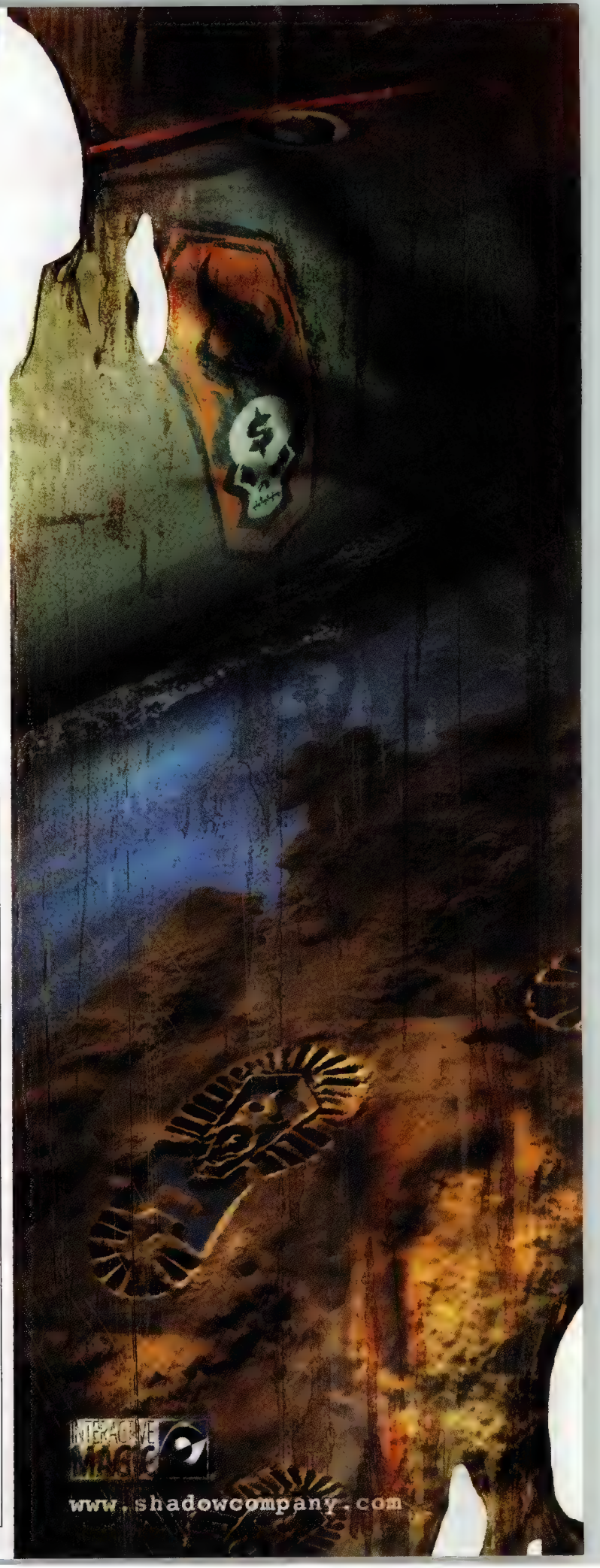
Looking for a complete reviews list? You'll find all of the hardware and software reviews we've ever done at *www.pcgamer.com*.



For the best, most irresistible columns you'll find on the 'net, go to *PC Gamer Online*.

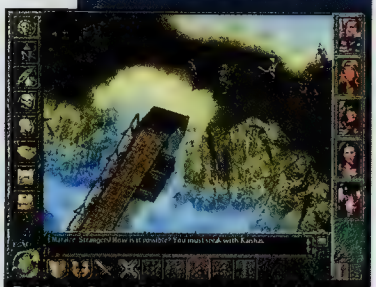


You won't find any lame *Barbie Fashion Designer* demos at *PC Gamer Online*. We give you only the best demos because you deserve the best!



Continued from page 50

fans that couldn't get enough of Black Isle Studios' *Baldur's Gate* can rest easy; an add-on adventure is on the way and could be available by the time you read this. Dubbed *Tales of the Sword Coast*, the expansion pack will deliver new quests, characters, and items. One of the new adventures will be set on an island off of the Sword Coast near the city of Baldur's Gate. The player must find a way onto the island, explore it, and thwart the evil forces that are threatening the mainland. Another adventure will take place in Durlag's Tower, a long-time bane of adventurous types.



Baldur's Gate addicts can stop shaking now; there's a new add-on pack on the way that will deliver more of the roleplaying goodness you crave.

Tarzan Action Game

In conjunction with the June 15 release of Disney's animated *Tarzan* feature film, the company's interactive division is preparing an action game for the PC. This one is aimed at the younger crowd, but anyone who's young at heart should enjoy this 3D romp through the jungle. You'll follow Tarzan's growth from boy to man through 16 levels, featuring obstacles such as quicksand, water snakes, and elephant stampedes. As you progress through the game, Tarzan will gain more skills including fighting with a spear, swinging on vines, and "tree surfing." PCG



The many creatures that inhabit the jungle, like this stork, are among your friends in *Tarzan*.

News Briefs

More Delays for C&C

The hotly anticipated *Command and Conquer: Tiberian Sun* from Westwood Studios has been delayed once again. As of press time, the release date will be sometime this summer as Westwood needs more time to properly finalize and tweak the game. Bummer.

Mega No More

Epic Games is the newly-truncated name of Epic MegaGames, the company that gave us *Unreal* (why the company's games are no longer Mega remains unclear). The company has also moved its headquarters and development team from Cary, NC, to Rockville, MD, in an effort to consolidate its resources. Says Mark Rein, vice president of the company, "*Unreal* was first created by developers who were scattered across the world. Eventually, the team came together to finish the game and that's when the real magic started. The move to North Carolina centralizes Epic, bringing all of the company's talented developers under one roof. We fully expect our future work, developed by a complete team working together in one place from beginning to end, will more than exceed expectations."

Batman returns to PC

Ubi Soft and Warner Brothers Interactive Entertainment have signed a licensing agreement to produce interactive titles based on the Batman franchise. The companies will work together to bring games based on the license to PC, Dreamcast, PlayStation, Nintendo 64, and Color GameBoy by the year 2000. One title is already in the works at Ubi Soft's New York development studio using the company's proprietary 3D technology.

An Elixir for Eidos

Eidos Interactive has signed a publishing agreement with Elixir Studios, a London-based developer created by Demis Hassabis, formerly of Bullfrog Productions. Hassabis was the co-developer on Bullfrog's *Theme Park* at the tender age of 16. He formed Elixir in 1998 and signed on some pretty impressive talent; four members of his team hold Double First Class Degrees in Computer Science from Cambridge University! The agreement calls for Eidos to publish the first three titles from Elixir, the first of which is due in the year 2000. There are no details available yet on the new games.



Take a deep breath and count to ten, Command and Conquer devotees — *Tiberian Sun* has been delayed again, this time until the summer.

EA Scores F1 License; GT Gets Indy

Electronic Arts has secured the rights to use the Formula One racing license in a series of new games. Details on the financial terms were not disclosed, but the fact that Formula One racing is the world's most popular spectator sports suggests that it didn't come cheaply. The deal encompasses all of the drivers, teams, cars, and tracks.

On a similar note, GT Interactive has acquired the exclusive rights to the Indianapolis 500, the Indy Racing League, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and all of the teams and drivers that participate in the event. GT has also acquired the rights for all sequels, add-ons, and level packs for any game which it publishes using this license.

Purple Moon Goes Poof

The company known for its "Games for Girls" line of software has closed its doors after three years, saying "consolidation in the CD-ROM market" was to blame. The closure has put 40 employees out of work.

Growing By Leaps and Bounds

The Interactive Digital Software Association (IDSA), the trade association that represents the U.S. video and PC games industry, has released figures stating that sales of computer and video games showed a whopping 35 percent increase in 1998 over the previous year. The console market provided the lion's share of the increase (37 percent), but even the PC market showed some impressive growth, registering 12 million more units sold; an 18 percent increase over last year.

Crowd Control Needed

Online gaming services (especially the free ones) are attracting more and more people to their sites. Blizzard Entertainment is claiming its Battle.net service now has more than 2.1 million members. It also says that since the release of *StarCraft*, more than 4.7 million games have been played over the service, with 50,000 simultaneous players during peak hours. Blizzard isn't the only one attracting the gamers in droves. Microsoft is saying that its service, the MSN Gaming Zone, has more than four million registered users, more than 30,000 on at once during peak hours, and 200,000 unique visitors every day. Adam Waalkes, product unit manager of the service, says, "Two hundred thousand daily visitors is more per day than all the Disney theme parks combined. This activity generates 22 million minutes of usage per day on the Zone." Not nearly as impressive, but growing steadily just the same, is SegaSoft's HEAT.NET. The company says its membership has nearly quintupled over the past year, closing out 1998 with 472,000 members.

The PC Gamer Playlist

What's hot at the magazine's offices this month.

Everything old is new again at the *PC Gamer* offices. A wave of retro gaming has taken over the staff as the classics of yesteryear are being rediscovered. Billy and Vederman started the trend, loading up the original *Quake*. Cries of "Eat my lightning gun, pal!" were heard emanating from the small corner of the room where we keep them cordoned off. All this commotion inspired the rest of us to revisit our old favorites. Luton really went off the deep end, roaming the hallways of *Wolfenstein 3D* once again. Wolf, fresh off of his third play through of *Baldur's Gate*, went back to his roots, loading up the original *Bard's Tale*. Whitta spent some time with a text parser, trying to remember that damned babel fish puzzle solution in Infocom's *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Jay was last seen defending the planet in round after round of *Space Invaders*, while Smoke found a nifty little NES emulator (and yes, he owns the original cartridge, so it's legal) that allowed him to relive one of his all-time favorite sports games, *Baseball Stars*. Dan thought it might be fun to do a little civilian aviating, but rather than turning to one of those fancy, new-fangled versions, he went with the original *Microsoft Flight Simulator*. Lisa and Dean, though, shamed us all as they engaged in what is perhaps the purest multiplayer duel ever created — the incomparable *Pong*! We did find some time to play games of a more recent vintage too...

1. *SimCity 3000* Everybody (except Dean)
2. *Myth II: Soulblighter* Billy, Jay
3. *Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus* Wolf
4. *High Heat Baseball 2000* Mluton
5. *Duke Nukem Forever* Everyone
6. *Quake II: CTF* Billy, Rob
7. *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri* Billy, Dan
8. *Starsiege: Tribes* Gary, Wolf
9. *Thief: The Dark Project* Rob, Dan
10. *Barbie "All Meat Diet" Simulator* Greg

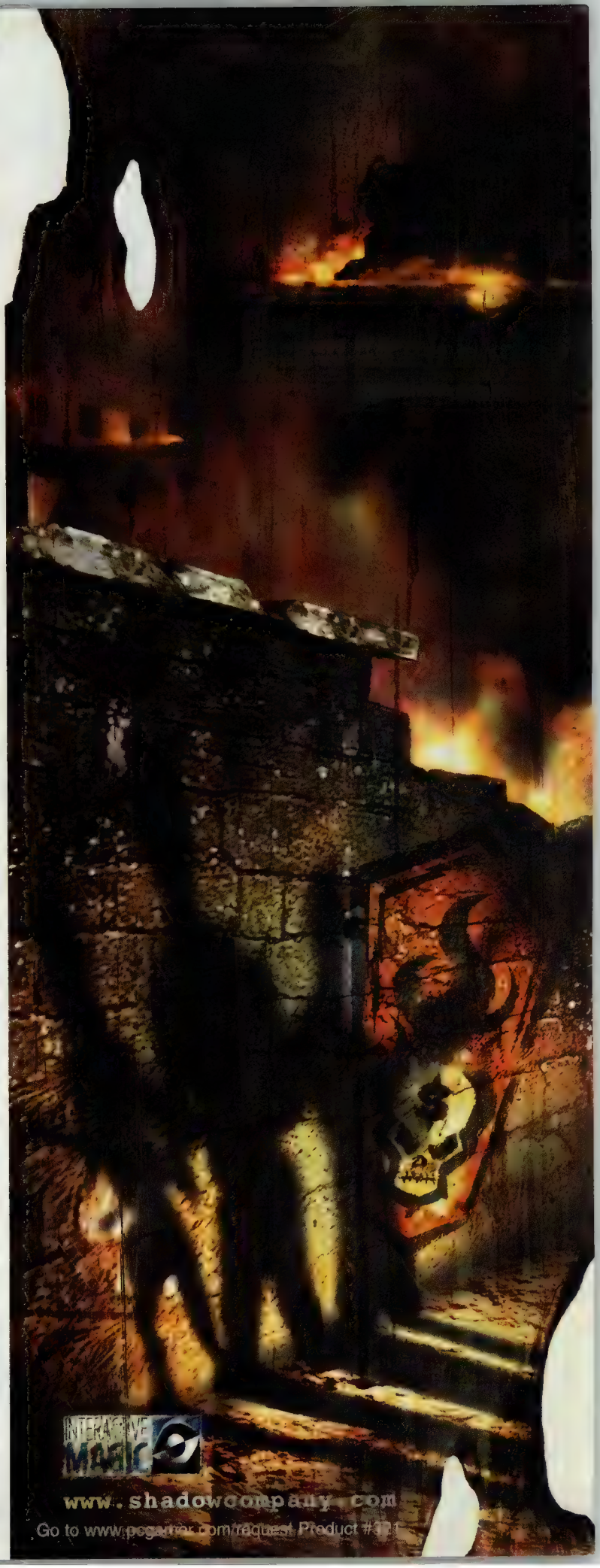
Shake up at Sierra

Continued from page 46

now, *Navy SEALS*, which had been scheduled for a 2000 release, the next game in the Krondor series, and the NFL-based new version of *3D Ultra Pinball* are no longer in Sierra's plans. According to Grenewetzki, all of the other 1999 releases such as *PGA Championship Golf 1999*, *Homeworld*, *Gabriel Knight 3*, and *NASCAR Racing 3* are on track (although the golf game has been delayed yet again and is now due in May). The other two games in development at Yosemite, *Middle Earth Online* and *Babylon 5 Space Combat Simulator*, will also remain on the schedule, as many of those working on these two games have agreed to relocate to Washington.

Sierra claims that this consolidation plan had been under consideration for many months but was put on hold during the sale process, and that Havas, the new owner, was not responsible for the move, although the parent company did approve the restructuring.

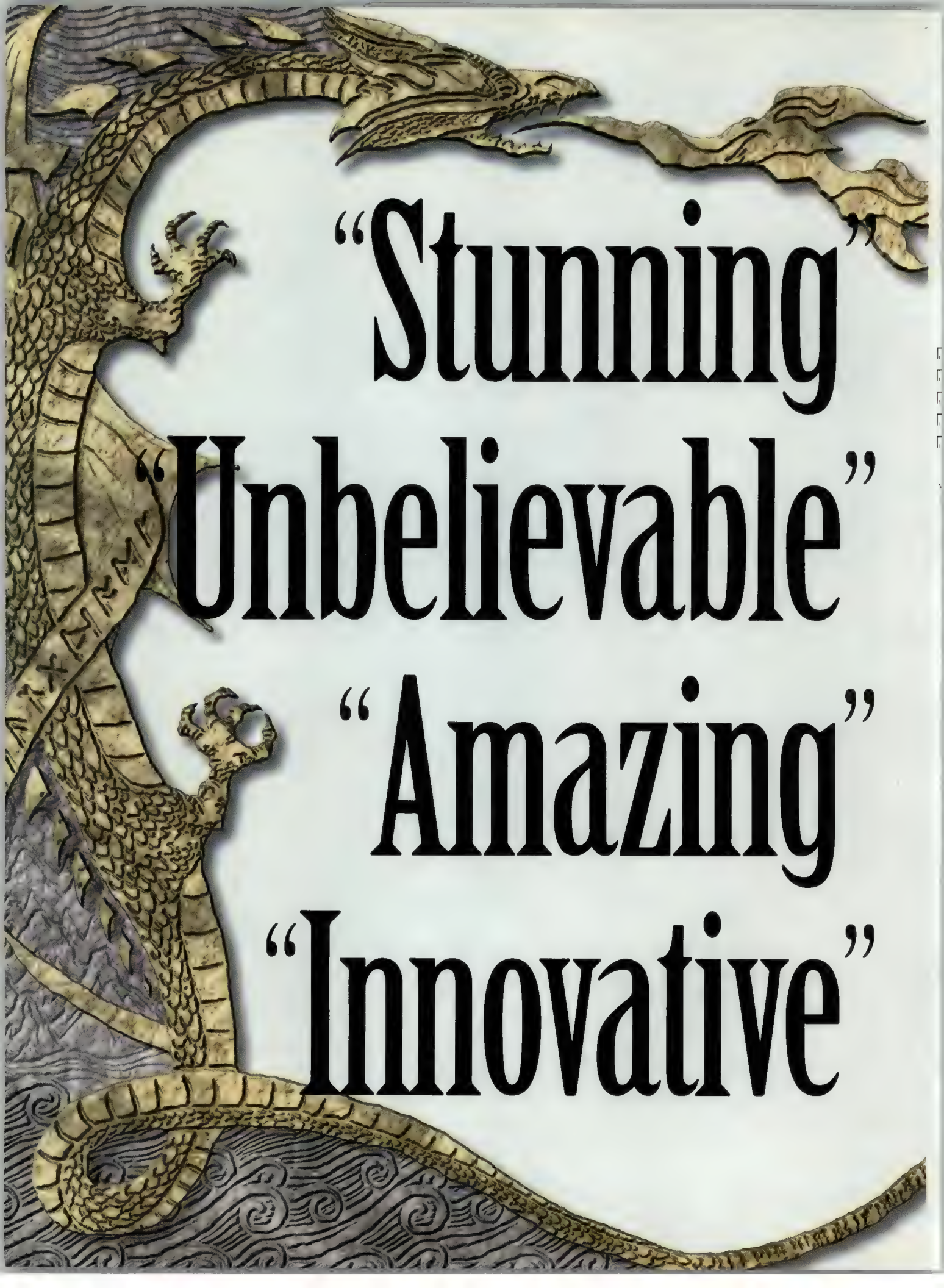
It remains to be seen how this latest move will affect an already disgruntled group of gamers. Another customer-irritating move was the announcement that InterAction Magazine, a quarterly bonus for those who purchase a Sierra title, will cease publication as of the Spring 1999 issue. Sierra says it has no other plans to shuffle other divisions or cancel scheduled games — let's hope that this restructuring is the start of a new era for the company.




RUGNOR'S



Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #749


"Stunning"
"Unbelievable"
"Amazing"
"Innovative"

"...a sure fire recipe for chaos and mayhem that no sane player would want to miss."

–Computer Games Strategy Plus

"...a fantasy tag team match on a global scale. It's melodrama, it's excitement, it works."

–Computer Gaming World

"...Total Annihilation: Kingdoms is completely unbelievable. Everything in the game moves with a grace and realism that is stunning."

–Imagine Games Network

"...fit to sit on the throne of RTS gaming."

–Gamer's Republic

"Never have we seen a game that goes to such great lengths to create an innovative, engrossing, story driven RTS of this magnitude ... we could be looking at something amazing ..."

–Gamefan

TOTAL ANNIHILATION

KINGDOMS™

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #248



boneyards™
ONLINE GAMING

CAVEDOG®
ENTERTAINMENT
A GT Interactive Company

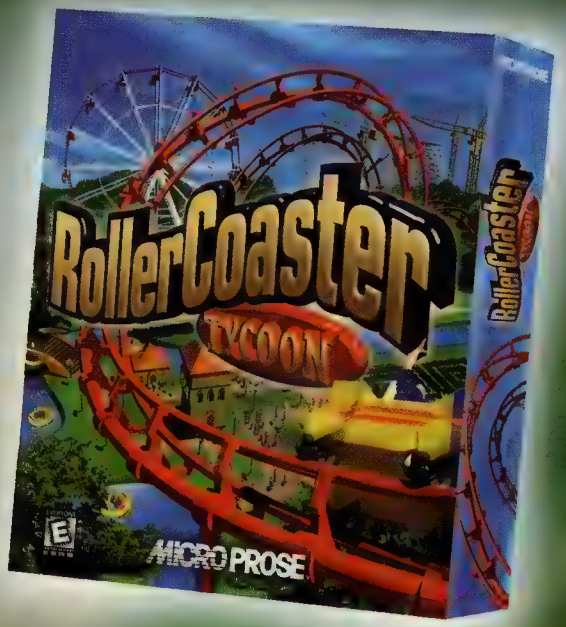
www.cavedog.com

©1999 Humongous Entertainment, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Total Annihilation and Total Annihilation: Kingdoms are trademarks of Humongous Entertainment, Inc. Cavedog Entertainment and the Cavedog Entertainment logo are registered trademarks of Humongous Entertainment, Inc. Created and published by Cavedog Entertainment, a division of Humongous Entertainment, Inc. Distributed by GT Interactive Software Corporation.

"91%... If there is such thing as a definite hit, this is it..." -PC Gamer (UK)
"5/5... Roller Coaster Tycoon will be a smash hit..." -PC Gaming World (UK)
"...gameplay is here in spades..." -Gamepower
"...not only fun, it's addictive..." -Happy Puppy



Building 17 loop-the-loops in a row seemed like a good idea at the time...



Thrills, spills, and chills have never been so much fun! You'll get to sculpt your park's terrain, hire the employees, and build the rides. You'll have an unlimited combination of roller coaster designs and landscapes to build the coolest 'coasters imaginable. You'll get to manage the entire park, from building and maintenance to research and development. And you'll wind up hopelessly addicted to creating the amusement park of your dreams.

EVERYONE E ESRB | PC CD-ROM | HASBRO Interactive | Chris Sawyer | MICROPROSE

www.microprose.com

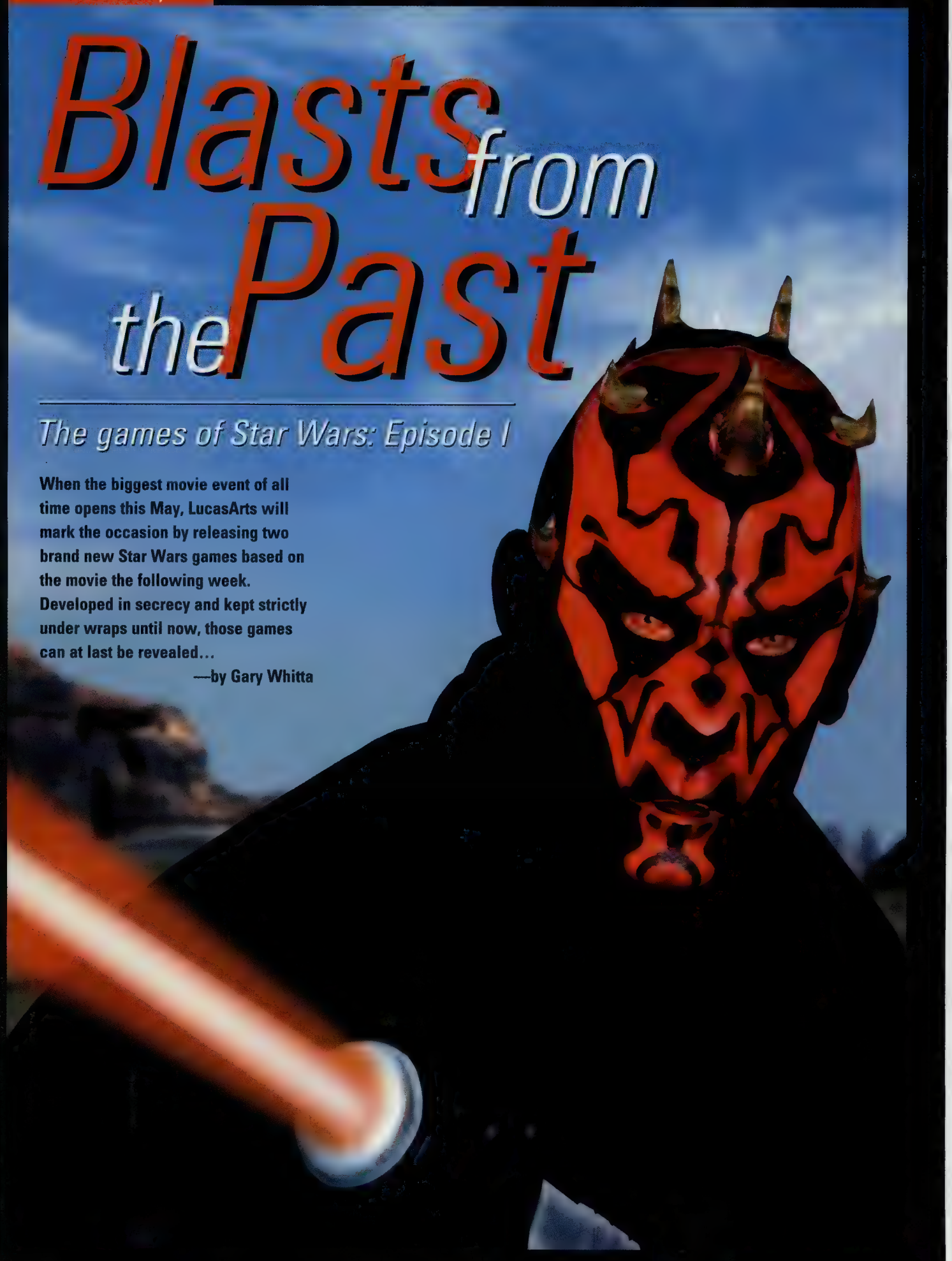
Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #283

Blasts from the Past

The games of Star Wars: Episode I

When the biggest movie event of all time opens this May, LucasArts will mark the occasion by releasing two brand new Star Wars games based on the movie the following week. Developed in secrecy and kept strictly under wraps until now, those games can at last be revealed...

—by Gary Whitta



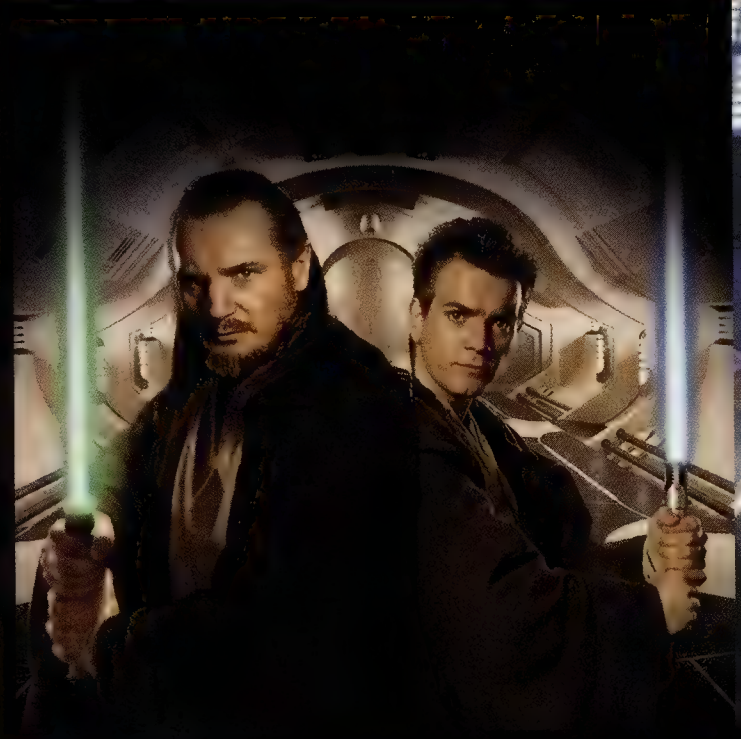
When the time came to sit down and write this story, I went back and forth for about five minutes on how to write the intro until the realization hit me that, by the time you read this story in mid-April, anything in the way of an introduction to *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace*, will undoubtedly be redundant. If you don't know by now what *The Phantom Menace* is or why it's a big deal, I can only assume that you've recently emerged after 30 years in an underground bomb shelter in some kind of hilarious Brendan Fraser-style scenario. Barring that presumably very small percentage of the public, we can move swiftly on to the stuff that the rest of you are here for: the cold, hard first look at the *Episode I* games.

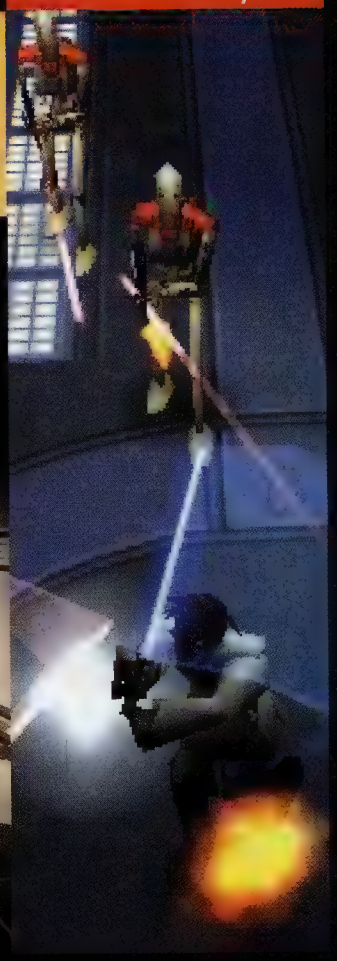
LucasArts is readying not one, but two *Episode I*-based games to hit the streets the week following the release of the movie in May. There's no shortage of company firsts here: this is the first time that LucasArts will have developed and released two *Star Wars* games in tandem, and the games will be the first PC titles from Lucas to be based directly and solely on the events of a single *Star Wars* movie — the idea being to break gamers in with a pair of straight-ahead movie tie-ins before branching out with more diverse "expanded universe" stuff later in the year and beyond. The long term plan is to shift all energies onto *Episode I*-based development, meaning that the forthcoming *X-Wing Alliance* and *Force Commander* will probably be the last "classic trilogy" Star Wars games we ever see.

For now, at least, LucasArts is taking no risks and casting its net wide with these first two offerings — both games are aimed squarely at the mainstream market and are in two very different genres, so chances at least one of them will appeal, whatever your gaming tastes. Both have their fair share of originality, but you'll have to look a little deeper than each game's title to find it: the action/adventure is called simply *Star Wars: Episode I — The Phantom Menace*, while the racer goes by the name of, er, *Star Wars: Episode I — Racer*. So, without further ado...

Star Wars: Episode I — page 62

The Phantom Menace

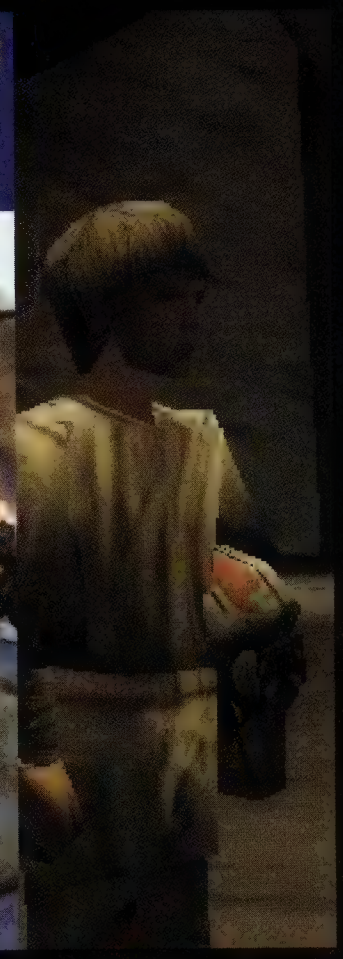




Star Wars: Episode I — page 68

Racer





Star Wars: Episode I —

The Phantom Menace



As young Obi-Wan Kenobi, you'll be able to use your lightsaber to deflect blaster fire from these pesky Federation Battle Droids.

The Phantom Menace represents LucasArts' first attempt to directly adapt a Star Wars movie for PC, and the company wisely elected to do so within a genre for which it is rightly revered — adventure. But before you old-schoolers get too excited about the idea of a SCUMM-based graphic adventure in the *Episode I* universe, be advised: *The Phantom Menace*, while still fundamentally an adventure, represents a big departure from LucasArts' traditional approach to the genre.

The first impression after seeing the *Phantom Menace* game in action is that it adopts a much more arcade-like approach than we're used to seeing from PC adventures. Gamers familiar with PlayStation titles like *Metal Gear Solid* or *Resident Evil* will instantly get the idea — the gameworld is rendered as a full 3D environment and viewed from a roving camera poised above and behind the player character. That may be partly due to the fact that the game was developed simultaneously with a Sony PlayStation version, and partly due to LucasArts' obvious attempt to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, as opposed to the traditionally small hardcore adventure market. It doesn't take a business genius to fathom the thinking behind this decision — that, for now, at least, any kind of "niche" title would be a waste of what is potentially the most lucrative license in history. Sound business sense to be sure, but nevertheless a philosophy that might cause die-hard gamers to be a little skeptical about what to expect from the game itself.



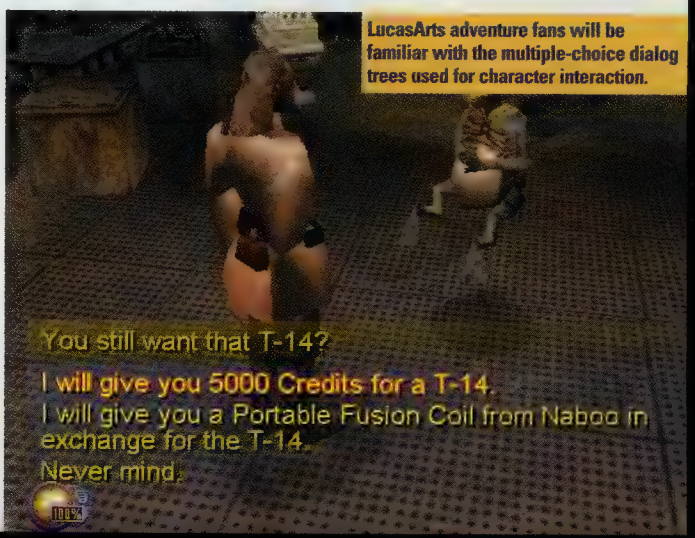
This production art shows an early concept for Obi-Wan Kenobi as he will appear in the *Phantom Menace* game.

> "While we didn't change any of the story, we did extend it in some areas. A scene in the movie that may last ten to fifteen minutes will take several hours to complete in the game."
>
> — *Dean Sharpe, project leader*

In the beginning...

The task of turning the movie into a PC game fell to Big Ape Productions, a team which has had a long, if not particularly distinguished, third-party development relationship with LucasArts. The team's credits include the Super Nintendo titles *Metal Warriors* and *Zombies Ate My Neighbors*, and most recently the Saturn and PlayStation versions of *Herc's Adventures*. The *Phantom Menace* will be Big Ape's first ever PC title — but that didn't dissuade the team from taking on the biggest movie license of all time. "When the opportunity to develop an *Episode I* title was presented to us, we naturally were very excited about the possibilities," says Dean Sharpe, project leader. "We wanted to do a PC game so that we didn't have the same type of constraints as we did when working on consoles."

Detailed information regarding the game's story is still somewhat shrouded in secrecy, since it follows the events of



LucasArts adventure fans will be familiar with the multiple-choice dialog trees used for character interaction.



Battle Droids will act as lightsaber fodder for Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon in the early stages of *The Phantom Menace*.

the movie closely — and Lucasfilm isn't about to let any major plot details slip out prior to the movie's opening. This much is known: the game opens with the player in the Jedi boots of young Obi-Wan Kenobi who has travelled to the planet Naboo with fellow Jedi Qui-Gon Jinn to help resolve what Sharpe will only refer to as "a distressing situation". As the story unfolds, the player will actually control four of the movie's principal characters — Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon, and also Queen Padme and Captain Panaka — assuming the role of each as the game shifts focus to center on their part in the overall story. "There are several main characters in the movie, and we wanted to use all of them depending on how they fit into each level or area in the game," explains Sharpe. "Although the Queen and Captain Panaka aren't used nearly as much in the game as Obi-Wan and Qui-Gon. We really did it to help diversify the gameplay and to add to the game in areas where the movie moved too rapidly — if we made some of the levels as long as they were in the movie, it would have been a very short game! Once people see the movie, they'll have a much better understanding of how the two characters work together. They're both really important to the story."

Inevitably, the team has taken some liberties with the movie's story to make it function as the game's interactive backdrop, although the primarily locations — the planets Naboo, Theed, Tatooine, and Coruscant, as well as the underwater city of Otah-gunga — remain the same in both game and movie. "While we didn't change any of the story, we did extend it in some areas," Sharpe explains. "For example, a scene in the movie that may last ten to fifteen minutes will take several hours to complete in the game. We've also added some side quests. These are things that the player doesn't have to do to finish the game but provide an extra bonus for them to enjoy. None of the side quests will change the story or alter how the game will end.

"Mos Espa is definitely the biggest environment in the game," Sharpe continues. "In terms of game time, we're estimating that it will take most people about ten hours to complete that level alone. Another example of that level's size is that players can interact with more than a hundred characters. We're estimating between forty to sixty hours to complete the whole game. That's not including finishing all of the side quests, though."

How it plays

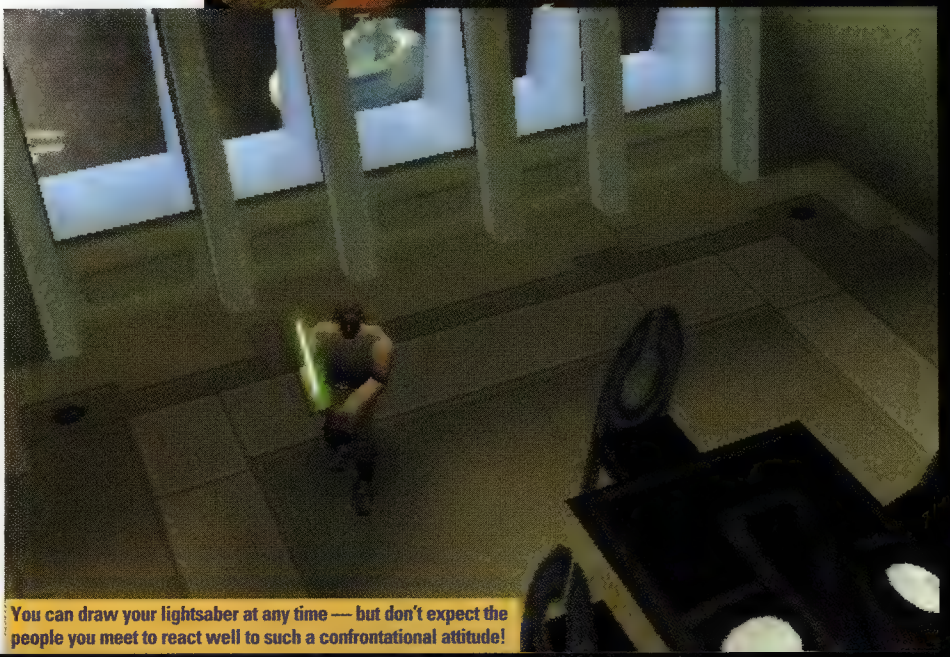
An early play-through of some of the game's levels suggests an interesting combination of game styles — shades of everything from *Tomb Raider* and *Resident Evil* to *Grim Fandango*, but with the emphasis always more on the adventurous side of gaming than pure running-and-gunning. At its most adventurous, the game is quite reminiscent of LucasArts' SCUMM-based roots, featuring a lot of inventory-based questing and branching dialogs with non-player characters, while at its most arcadey, it almost seems like an out-and-out console game, featuring *Tomb Raider*-style jumping and block-pushing challenges.

"The main objective was to make a fun game that anyone could play," says Sharpe. "LucasArts never told us that they wanted an adventure game or an action game — it was really our strengths and our passion as developers that led us down the adventure path. It actually turned out to be much more than just a traditional adventure game, though. Our focus was to make sure that the game followed the movie as closely as possible, which meant we would have to do several different types of gameplay throughout — we had to create some action elements such as jumping and shooting, but we also had to have some SCUMM-type puzzles that involved dialogue with NPCs, and inventory puzzles.

"The other issues centered around the technology and how we could make



Transitions between levels will be handled by a seamless combination of cinematic and in-game cut scenes.



You can draw your lightsaber at any time — but don't expect the people you meet to react well to such a confrontational attitude!



These Battle Droids are tough and attack in large numbers — fortunately, your lightsaber will turn 'em into scrap.

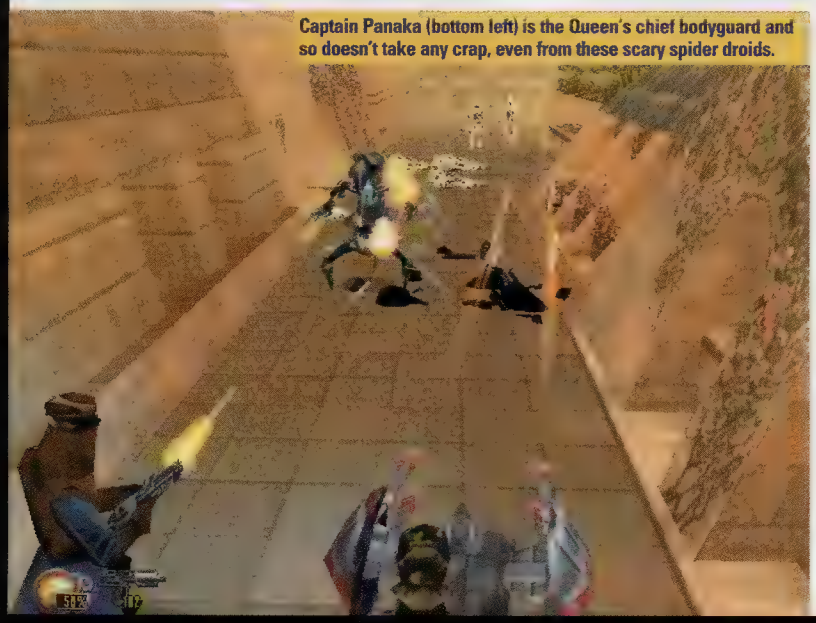
You may be a Jedi, but you can only take so much punishment — keep an eye on your health meter.

the game work on home console platforms," Sharpe says. "But our biggest balancing act was how to satisfy the casual gamer and yet make it challenging enough for hard core gamers. We're confident we've achieved the right balance. We've done a lot of things to make sure that the average user can jump in and start playing. For example, the characters attacks can all be done with one button. By holding or pressing a button, the player can attack and block shots with the lightsaber. For more advanced players, there are combo attacks, jump attacks, and other techniques such as strafing.

"Initially, players begin with a lot of action and fairly simple puzzles," continues Sharpe. "As the player goes through the game, it will naturally get more difficult, with more difficult puzzles to solve. The Mos Espa level has some really great puzzles that are both inventory-based and action-based. On the later levels, you'll actually have to switch characters in the middle of the level because much of the action in the story is taking place simultaneously."

From movie...to game

Another big challenge for Big Ape in creating a game based on *Episode I* is that everything surrounding the movie has been kept so secret — when the team started working on the project nearly two years ago, there was virtually nothing to go on. "Initially, it was challenging since there wasn't a lot of material except for concept art and the script," explains Sharpe. "Since a great deal of the movie is being done with computer graphics, it wasn't easy making the game match what people will ultimately end up seeing in the film. A lot of stuff actually changed after we had implemented it into the game, so you'll see some things in the game that didn't make the cut into the final film."



Captain Panaka (bottom left) is the Queen's chief bodyguard and so doesn't take any crap, even from these scary spider droids.

As development time for both game and movie wore on, however, the doors began to open up. "Lucasfilm gave us unprecedented access to everything that was being created for the film," says Sharpe. "Of course, we had to sign strict non-disclosure agreements before we could do anything, but we saw a great deal of concept art, scripts, and eventually bits of the film that were finished. There was also a lot of still photography that we needed to view to see how the characters looked, what the environments looked like, and so on."

The results, so far as it's possible to say without having seen a finished version of either game or movie, are impressive. Big Ape looks to have done a fine job of capturing the overall look of the movie, as well as the adventurous spirit of the *Star Wars* universe. It'll be interesting to see how well the diverse mix of game styles gels in the final version, however — it's possible that by attempting to appeal to such a mainstream audience (as well as create a game that sits equally well on both the PlayStation and PC) with this approach, the gameplay may alienate LucasArts' adventure gaming hard core. We'll know for sure the week of May 23rd when *Star Wars Episode I: The Phantom Menace* arrives on store shelves. In the meantime, you'll want to invest in a 3D card if you don't already have one — following a trend set by *Shadows of the Empire* and *Rogue Squadron 3D*, *The Phantom Menace* will be the latest *Star Wars* title to require 3D acceleration.

To read about **Racer**, *turn to page 68*

IF YOU WANT TO FRAG IN 16.7 MILLION COLORS TURN ON THE POWER

"ATI totally proved 3Dfx wrong by showing 32-bit rendering can be done without a performance hit..."
www.gamersdepot.com

GRAPHICS BY ATi rage 128

- Why play in 64,000 colors when RAGE FURY delivers sinfully fast 32-bit color rendering without compromising 3D frame rate performance
- Packing 32MB of memory, RAGE FURY gives you the fastest 128-bit 3D graphics accelerator available today
- Featuring hardware DVD video acceleration and TV-out for big screen gaming
- Supports ATI-TV WONDER, the TV tuner add-on board
- Check out www.atitech.com for history-making news on RAGE FURY and the latest 32-bit true color 3D games



THE POWER OF SPEED

ATi

QUAKE II FRAME RATES

32-bit COLOR 800x600

ATI RAGE FURY (RAGE 128 GL)
68 fps

STB VELOCITY 4400 (RIVA TNT)
46 fps

STB VOODOO 3 3000
Not Supported

DIAMOND MONSTER FUSION (BANSHEE)
Not Supported

Fastest 32-bit color performance

http://www.atitech.com/ad/pcg

© Copyright 1999 ATI Technologies Inc. ATI, RAGE 128, RAGE FURY and ATI-TV WONDER are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of ATI Technologies Inc. All other company and/or product names are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of their respective manufacturers.Please refer to www.atitech.com/online/fineprint for performance benchmark hardware and software information.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #013

WE DIDN'T JUST CREATE A NEW WORLD, WE CREATED A NEW STANDARD.

"98%" (Highest review score ever awarded) —PC Gamer

★★★★★ (5 out of 5) —Computer Gaming World

"Alpha Centauri is unmistakably the rightful heir to the Civilization throne. It's also the best strategy game ever made."—PC Gamer

"Meier has again set the gold standard for strategy."—Newsweek

XXXXX (5 out of 5) —Cnet Gamecenter

"Civilization meets Star Wars."—TIME Magazine

THIS IS THE STRATEGY GAME TO BUY.

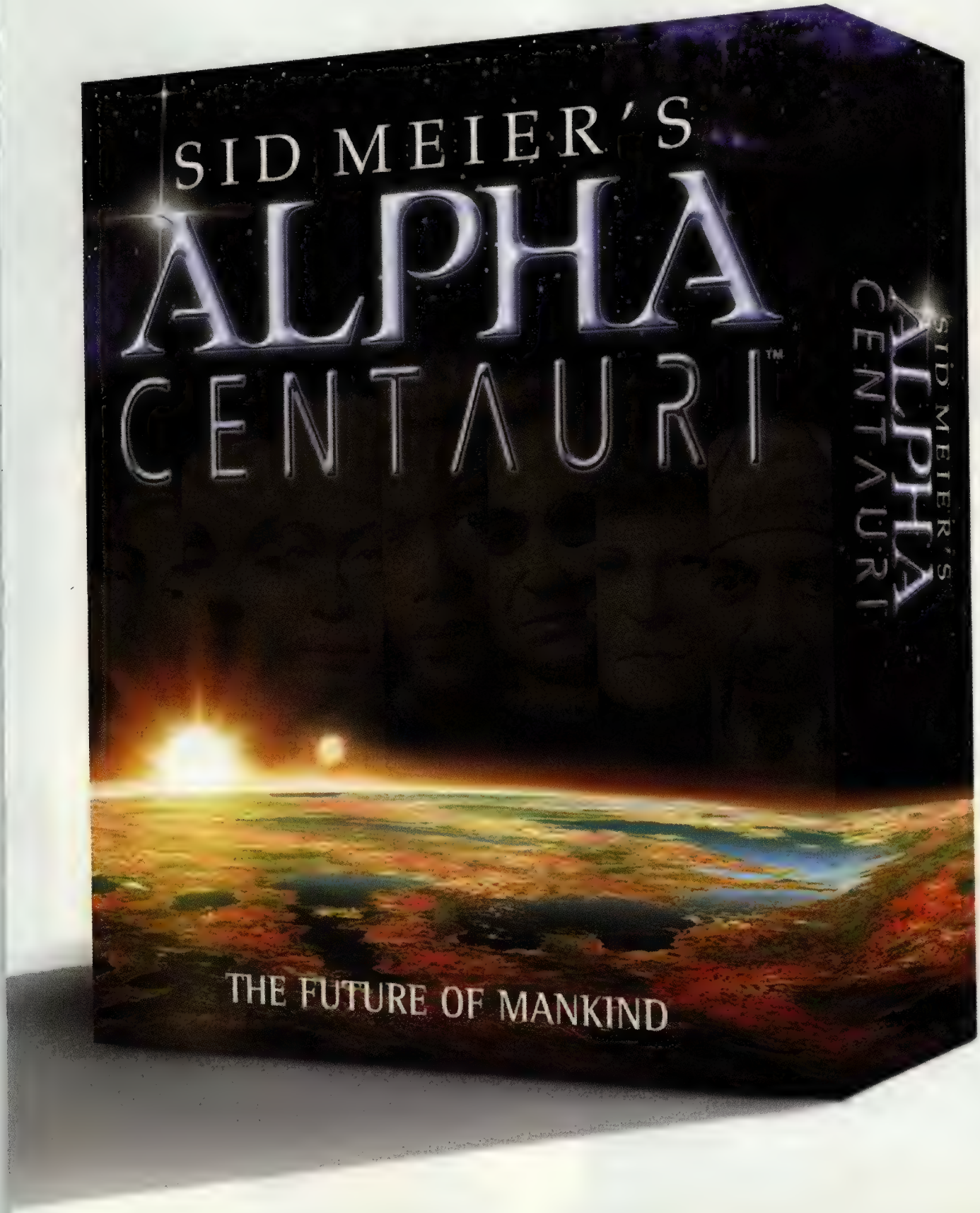
Check it out at www.alphacentauri.com

FIRAXIS GAMES

ELECTRONIC ARTS™

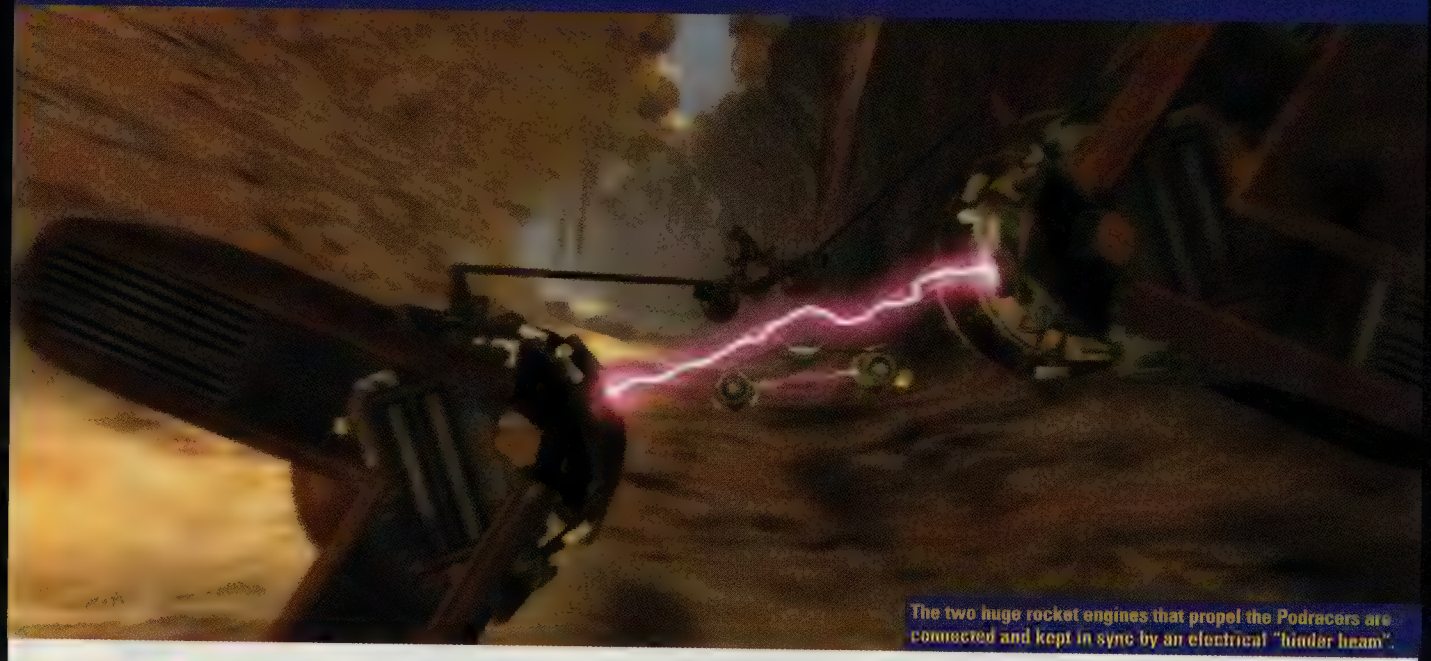
©1999 Electronic Arts. Electronic Arts and the Electronic Arts logo are trademarks of Electronic Arts in the U.S. and/or other countries. All rights reserved. Alpha Centauri and Firaxis Games are trademarks of Firaxis Games, Inc.

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB


SID MEIER'S
ALPHA
CENTAURI™
THE FUTURE OF MANKIND
SID MEIER'S ALPHA CENTAURI

Star Wars: Episode I —

Racer



The two huge rocket engines that propel the Podracers are connected and kept in sync by an electrical "tinder beam".

Of the handful of kick-ass action sequences that George Lucas is promising for *Episode I*, there's one that's already promising to have the biggest impact on audiences. It's the scene that's already well known amongst avid *Episode I*-watchers and Internet rumor-mongers as the "Podrace," it looks amazing and it's also, perhaps not surprisingly, the focus of LucasArts' other *Episode I* game.

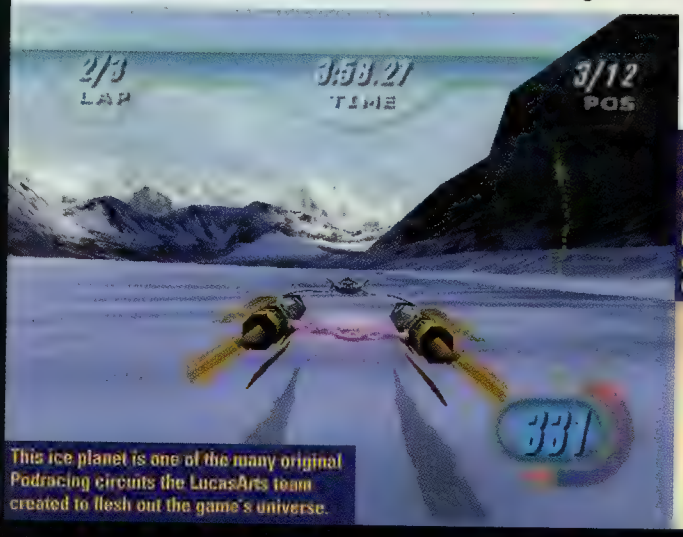
Star Wars: Episode I — Racer, though not exactly cunningly titled, has so far blown away the privileged few outside of LucasArts to have seen and played it. It's a fast action 3D-accelerated racing game that makes other sci-fi racers like *Wipeout* and *Powerslide* look like *Driving Miss Daisy*.

Those who haven't been keeping up with their pre-release *Episode I* hype will have cause to wonder how a racing game has anything to do with a *Star Wars* license. Well, it turns out that Anakin Skywalker was something of a boy racer in his younger days when he was growing up as a slave on Tatooine. In his home town of Mos Espa, the masses' favorite spectator sport is Podracing, in which pilots strap themselves into tiny cockpits pulled along by cables attached to a pair of massive rocket engines. It's a high-tech variant on the ancient (and almost as dangerous) Roman sport of chariot racing — here, the pods are the chariots and the giant engines the horses. The Podracers (as the vehicles are known) are so powerful and tricky to control that the pilots are almost all multi-limbed aliens — young Anakin is the only human deemed good enough to be allowed to race.

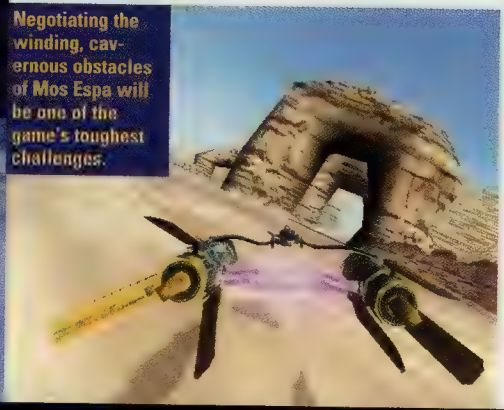
> "As soon as we heard about the Podrace sequence, we knew it would make a great game. It's fast, it's thrilling, it has a whole mess of brand new *Star Wars* characters and vehicles — it's perfect."
>
> —*Jon Knoles, co-project leader*

In the movie's race sequence, Anakin competes against a wide field of alien pilots on a circuit comprising some of Tatooine's most treacherously rocky terrain — at speeds approaching 600mph! It's such a tentpole sequence that it occupies a full ten minutes of the movie's running time, and was an obvious choice for LucasArts when time came to isolate scenes worthy of game adaptation. "As soon as we heard about the Podrace sequence, we knew it would make a great game," says Jon Knoles, one of the game's project leaders. "It's fast, it's thrilling, it has a whole mess of brand new *Star Wars* characters and vehicles — it's perfect. Not only that, but making a game based on one exciting sequence of the film gave us a great deal of creative freedom without having to wait for ideas, plot elements, and designs to come from Lucasfilm or ILM which may not have been resolved at that time.

"So, we began



This ice planet is one of the many original Podracing circuits the LucasArts team created to flesh out the game's universe.



Negotiating the winding, cavernous obstacles of Mos Espa will be one of the game's toughest challenges.

experimenting with some low-altitude flight models, some space sim things, and the like, wondering where it would fit in with the whole *Episode I* movie," Knoles says. "When we were first shown a sneak peak at a very rough animatic of the Podrace sequence, that really got our juices flowing — Wow! We couldn't wait to get going on the real thing."

On your marks, set...

Knoles is part of a 20-strong internal development team at LucasArts that has collectively contributed to such Star Wars titles *as Jedi Knight, TIE Fighter, X-Wing, Rogue Squadron 3D, Shadows of the Empire,* and both *Rebel Assault*s. The team was brought together for the task of turning the movie's Podrace sequence into an equally exhilarating game — and early playtests suggest that the movie sequence itself may have its work cut out for it if it wants to keep pace with the PC-based action. This is one *fast* game.

First impressions upon playing: imagine the 3D speed, low-altitude race/flight model and traditional third-person view of a racer like *Wipeout* combined with the unique production design and quirky control that results from basing a race game around such unique vehicles. Then accelerate that experience by a factor of five or six. *Star Wars: Episode I — Racer* boasts an impressive graphics engine that actually manages to convey the sense of racing at speeds as high as 600mph. This amazing sense of speed is particularly impressive when you consider the high level of on-screen detail. "The Podracers — engines, cockpits, cables, exhaust flames, pilot, binder beam and all — can top out at over 1,000 polygons," says Knoles. "The world itself may average between 1,000 and 2,500 polygons — of course, this fluctuates all the time. All this, plus some massive screen-fill at times (that means very large polygons to the layman), and we're running at around 30 frames per second. It's a tricky thing to do when you load worlds with as much graphic detail as we have, not to mention the fact that rendering one Podracer is like rendering three cars in any other game."

If you haven't already guessed — yes, *Star Wars: Episode I — Racer* will require a 3D accelerator.

Expanding the universe

Star Wars: Episode I — Racer actually expands on the race-based events of the movie somewhat — since there's only one circuit (Mos Espa) shown in the film, and not all the rival racers feature prominently, the team had to expand the Podracing universe quite a bit in order to tailor enough material for an entire game. "We were never worried about not having enough material to make a good game, as long as we were given the okay to create our own environments," says Knoles. "We were given the green light to go ahead and create our own Galactic Podrace Circuit, where the movie's race course on Tatooine is the final championship round. There are so many new aliens and fantastic vehicles that, if anything, we had more than enough to play with. That's the beauty of George Lucas' creation in *Star Wars* — there's always something new and exciting, yet it all seems somehow familiar."

With the go-ahead to create its own original Podrace circuits, the team set about coming up with course designs. "We talked about what kinds of racing games we liked, didn't like, played a whole lot of them, and generally experimented," says Knoles. "Pretty much from the start, we'd pump out a whole series of crazy tracks without much detail, just to see what we could do with our physics engine and what would be acceptable game performance. We also knew, based on the scale of the movie's Podrace course, that some of our tracks would be *huge* — twenty to forty miles in length. Keep in mind this is a distance covered in two or three minutes at Podracer speeds of 400 to 600mph.

"We also asked Peter Chan, a former LucasArts artist now working on his own, to draw up some conceptual paintings and sketches based on some ideas he and I mulled over, as well as ideas gleaned from Doug Chiang's terrific conceptual renderings for the *Episode I* film," Knoles says. "This inspired our first two course designers, Jacob Stephens and Duncan Brown (from the *Jedi Knight* team) to go right to work, though there was some learning of new tools involved. We kinda made things up as we went."

The results are impressively varied. Aside from the Mos Espa circuit gamers will recognize from the film, *Racer*'s circuits — more than 20 in all — boast such diverse features as fiery methane lakes, half-mile wide chasms in the track, dense swamps, submarine tunnels, falling asteroids and — in the very cool-looking "Penal Asteroid" level — zero-gravity vacuum tunnels that Podracers can blast through at incredible speeds.



Twenty different pods provide *Racer* with graphical variety, as well as different handling characteristics.



This sequence of stills from *The Phantom Menace* can only hint at how thrilling the movie's Podracing scene will actually be...



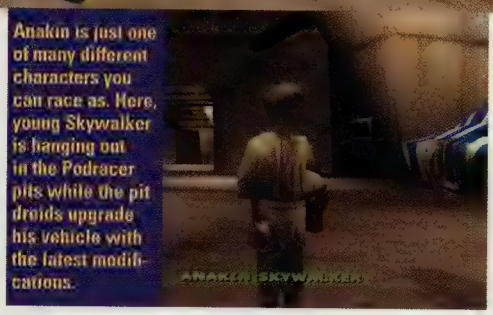
Podracing is a dirty sport, and rival racers can be bumped off the course and even into obstacles to take them out of competition.

Your chariot awaits!

Then there are the Podracers themselves. Of the 20-plus vehicles and pilots featured in the game, you'll be able to recognize 18 from the movie — although some only very, very briefly so you may have to see the film several times to spot them all *(no problem there! — millions of Star Wars geeks)*. It's a wide field, which has given the *Racer* team plenty of opportunity to experiment with different pilot and vehicle characteristics. "Some Podracers are literally twice or three times the size of others — which posed some unique course design problems," says Knoles. "They all have their own unique shape, paint schemes, and performance characteristics. All of the pilots are aliens, with the exception of Anakin, and they are all four feet tall or shorter, which gave our animators a great opportunity to have a whole mess of fun. Podracers are a decidedly brash group of ruffians, too, so we were able to make up a lot of nasty insults they toss at one another. Most of these characters are not seen from head to toe in the movie, so we were able to give them our own touches to their personalities and costumes."

Although the game's basic control method is fairly traditional, players will have to get used to a few new tricks based on the Podracers' novel chariot-style design. "The game was designed to take advantage of the benefits of an analog joystick/controller," says Knoles. "The engines can be 'reined in' a bit to take tighter turns and absorb the shock of landing from a wild jump — we have a lot of those — or can be forced downward for maximum speed, but you lose a bit of steering ability."

In a feature that mimics some of the pre-race activity portrayed in the movie, players will be able to further customize their chosen Podracer by paying a visit to Watto, the parts dealer. By using the money you win from races, you can augment your Podracer's acceleration, speed, steering, braking, and other critical systems. "If you don't like the way your Podracer handles, just place fourth or better in some races to earn some money and make it better," says Knoles. By "some races" he's referring to the game's variable prize allocation based on difficulty level — on certain levels, the money is staggered throughout the field, while in others, it's winner takes all.



Anakin is just one of many different characters you can race as. Here, young Skywalker is hanging out in the Podracer pits while the pit droids upgrade his vehicle with the latest modifications.

The final lap

Star Wars: Episode I — Racer is currently looking in great shape — most of the vehicles and courses are finished, and the work now is concentrated on bug-hunting and implementing the promised multiplayer mode. Races can accommodate up to eight Podracers, and the plan is to allow all of them to be player-controlled via LAN or the Internet. This somewhat unique form of racing will undoubtedly take some getting used to, but based on the variety and sheer speed that *Racer* is currently exhibiting, it looks as though this could be just the change in pace that gamers weary of run-of-the-mill car-based racers have been waiting for.

PCG

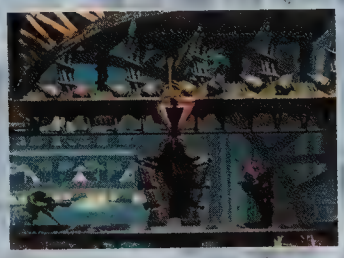


Yes, you read it right — 407mph. These Podracers can clock some serious speeds — and that's *without* using the turbo boost!

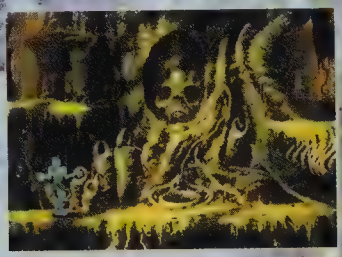
This Odd's for You.



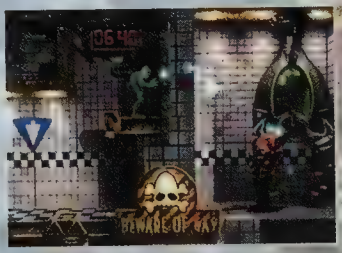
Save the Mudokons and save your game anywhere!



Abe gets all emotional! More panic! More talking! More pleading!



Tons of cool new power-ups! Invisibility! Healing powers! And more!



Flesh-eating Fleeches! Undead Mudombies! Bone-grinding Greeters!

"...combines stunning graphics and engrossing gameplay." (★ ★ ★ ★ out of four)
- USA TODAY

"An awesome successor to an outstanding original."
- GAMES ADDICT

"Top Ten, Hot 100 Games for the Holidays."
- COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

"Witty, fun and full of action... a great game to usher in the new year."
- LA TIMES

"...brilliant scripting and...hilarious... gameplay distinguish this title as something special."
- FORBES ONLINE



In odd we trust

Available at your local retail store. Order direct at www.gtstore.com or call 1-800-610-GTIS

PC CD ROM

A.L.I.V.E.
Aware Lifeforms In Virtual Entertainment

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

NEED A HINT?
1-900-CALL-2GT
(225-5248)
(95¢ per minute $1.95 for fax back maps) Must be 18 years or older or have parents permission to call. Touch tone phones only.

ODDWORLD INHABITANTS™
www.oddworld.com

GT Interactive Software
www.gtgames.com

Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus™ © 1998 Oddworld Inhabitants, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Created by Oddworld. Published and Distributed by GT Interactive Software Corp. GT is a trademark and the GT Logo is a registered trademark of GT Interactive Software Corp. Oddworld Inhabitants Logo is a registered trademark of Oddworld Inhabitants, Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies.

THIEF EMERGES FROM THE SHADOWS



5 stars
"Immersive environments, impressive weapons, and excellent level design." – Gamecenter

"The graphics are beautiful, but the gameplay is even more inspired." – Newsweek Online

"Quite possibly the world's most novel first-person shooter. I haven't had this much fun in long, long time." – PC Games

4.5 stars
"One of the freshest experiences in gaming." – Computer Gaming World

9.1 rating
"It's emphasis on stealth, strategy, and ingenuity, coupled with its strong narrative structure and excellent mission design, adds up to a game that's stylish, serious, rewarding, and unique." – Gamespot

Thief captures top ratings

LOOKING GLASS STUDIOS
www.lglass.com

www.3dfx.com

MATURE M AGES 17+ CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

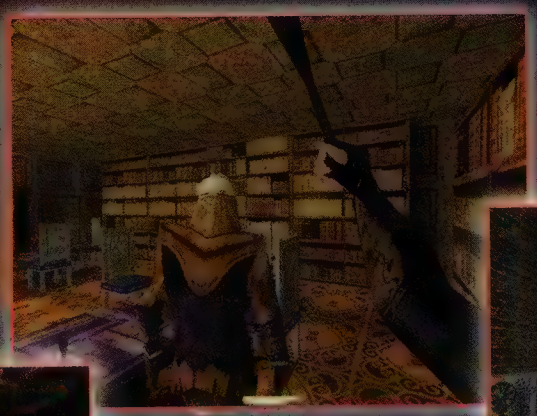
GAMEWORTHY cnet www.gamecenter.com
COMPUTER GAMING WORLD ★★★★½
EDITORS' CHOICE
CGW PREMIER 1999

TO STEAL RAVE CRITICAL REVIEWS!

"Thief blazes a new trail." – Computer Games Strategy Plus

"Thief may very well define a new standard for interaction and immersion." – PC Gamer

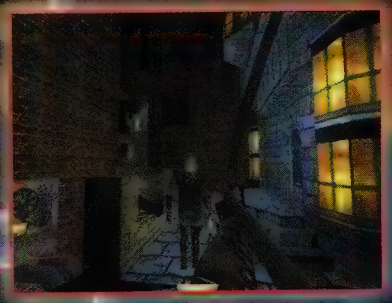
"The atmosphere and gameplay make this one stand alone." – Computer Gaming World

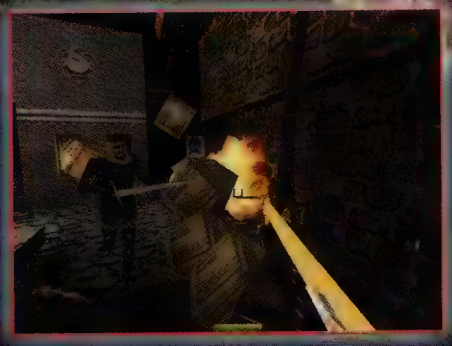


12 Huge Missions with multiple environments.

Advanced Enemies can see, hear, speak and sound alarms.

Stealthy Gameplay brings a new dimension to first person action.







Your Arsenal Includes: blackjack, sword, fire arrows, water arrows, rope, arrows and more!

THIEF™

THE DARK PROJECT

Download the demo at: eidosinteractive.com

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

www.eidosinteractive.com

© Interrautics Entertainment Software, LLC dba Looking Glass Studios 1998. All rights Reserved. Eidos Interactive is a trademark of Eidos, PLC. Thief: The Dark Project is a trademark of Interactrics Entertainment Software, LLC dba Looking Glass Studios. System Shock, Ultima, and Underworld are trademarks of Electronic Arts, Inc. and/or it's wholly owned subsidiaries. The 3DFx Interactive logo is a trademark of 3Dfx Interactive, Inc.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #177

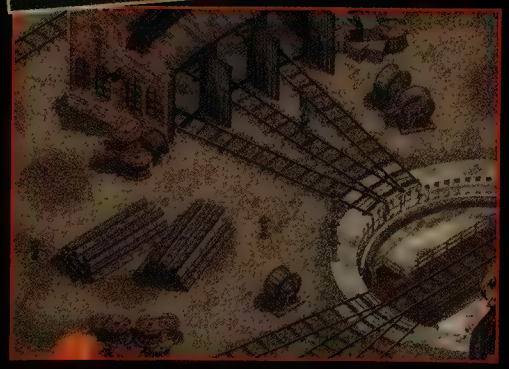
REAL SOLDIERS DON'T FIGHT LITTLE PLASTIC MEN.

Enlist the aid of the **Dirty 1/2 Dozen** as you venture behind enemy lines in COMMANDOS: BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY, an engaging stand-alone game with the same popular gameplay as the original hit.

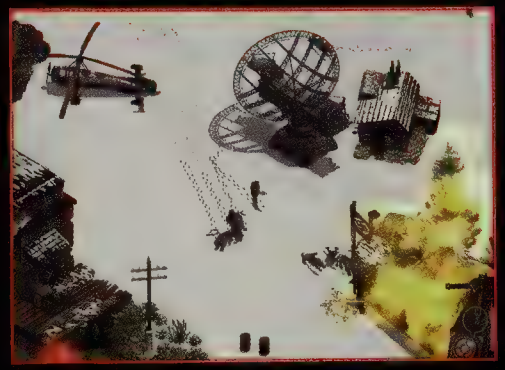
This eight-mission mini-epic spans Europe, from the East to the Mediterranean, immersing the user in the thrills of WWII tactical action.

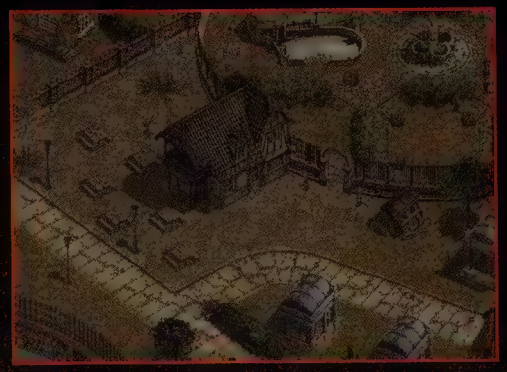
- Improved photo realistic graphics
- New weapons like the Enfield Rifle
- New Panzer and Luftwaffe enemy units
- Locations include a zoo and Luftwaffe airbase
- Added decoys like the rock toss and cigarette distraction
- Two skill levels to indoctrinate new Commando recruits
- Enjoy multi-player mode over the internet

GO TO WAR AND GET THE DEMO AT:
www.eidosinteractive.com











COMMANDOS

BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY™

Tiny

PYRO STUDIOS

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

EIDOSGAMES.ON.NET FREE INTERNET PLAY

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

GO TO WAR!

COMMANDOS: Beyond the Call of Duty and Eidos Interactive are trademarks of EIDOS Plc. ©1997-1998 Eidos. All Rights Reserved.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #164



Warzone 2100™ Pumpkin Studios 1998. © and Published by Eidos Interactive 1998. All Rights Reserved.

In the year 2085 the Collapse came hard and fast. Only a select few had the strength and intelligence to rebuild the world from the embers of a nuclear holocaust. You were one of them.

REVOLUTIONARY UNIT DESIGN

Warzone 2100 showcases a depth of play never seen before in a strategy game. 400 different types of technologies allow you to design and build more than 2000 battle units. That's right. Unit designs aren't predetermined for you. Use your own wits to create an unbeatable battle arsenal.

SUPERIOR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

The AI engine is so sophisticated that it allows you to recycle the experience of your field units into bigger, better and even more fierce war machines. Over time, combat units become more accurate, command units command larger groups of troops and repair units repair faster and more efficiently.

FULL 3D BATTLEFIELDS

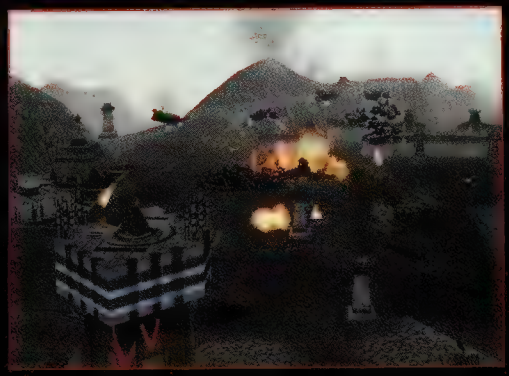
Warzone 2100 slams the door on other top-down 2D strategy games. It showcases a lightning fast, fully functional 3D game engine with a rotatable and zoomable camera for fast and furious gaming action. Not just eye candy, you'll experience true line-of-sight and fog-of-war effects. Strategically placed radar units warn you of hidden enemy units and allow you to lob mortar shells over mountain obstructions.

IT'S TIME TO TAKE YOUR FATE INTO YOUR OWN HANDS. THEN USE THEM TO BUILD A NEW WORLD

WARZONE 2100

STRATEGY BY DESIGN





DOWNLOAD THE PC DEMO AT:

www.eidosinteractive.com

Pumpkin Studios

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

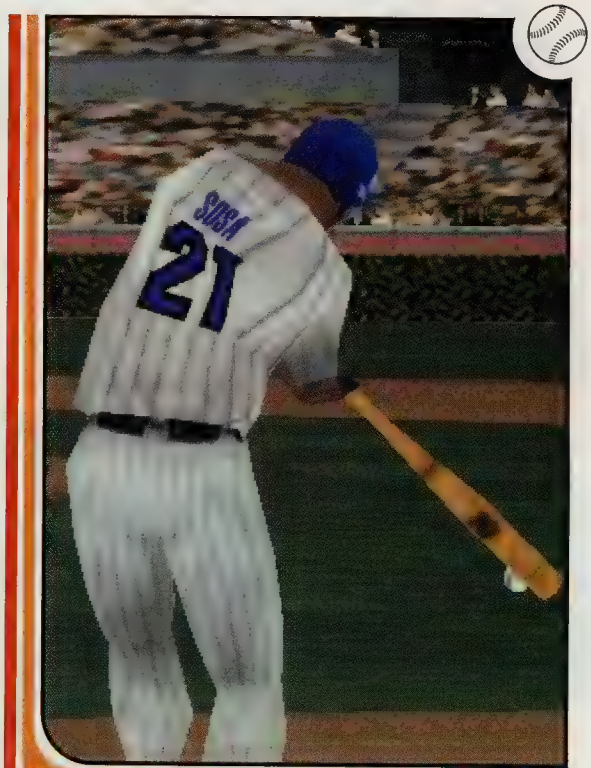
Go to http://pcgamer.ign.com/request Product #195

THE RAC
PEN



HIGH HEAT BASEBALL 2000

PAGE 80



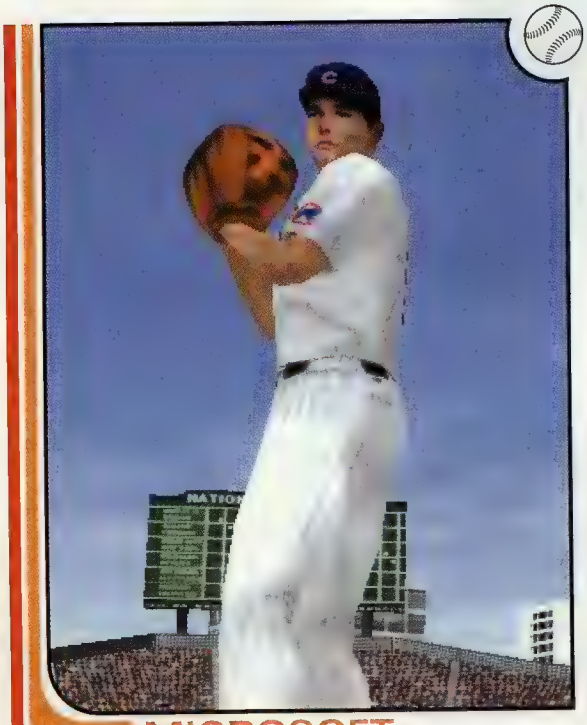
TRIPLE PLAY 2000

PAGE 84

PLUS: HARDBALL 6 — 2000 EDITION *89* ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2000 *89*
BASEBALL MOGUL 99 *89* DIAMOND MIND BASEBALL *89*
DYNASTY LEAGUE BASEBALL *89* BASEBALL FOR WINDOWS *90*

E FOR THE NT

The boys of summer are back for another sluggin' season, and this year's ball games look better than ever. So grab a beer and a hot dog, and enjoy:



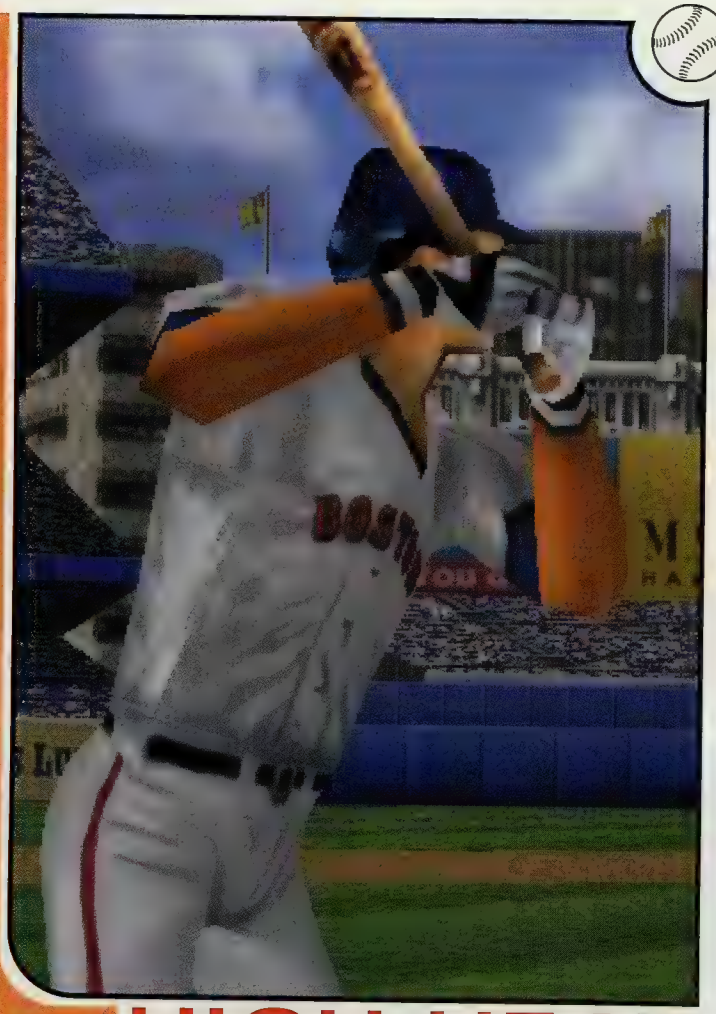
MICROSOFT BASEBALL 2000 PAGE 85



INTERPLAY SPORTS BASEBALL EDITION 2000 PAGE 86

STRAT-O-MATIC BASEBALL 90 FULL COUNT BASEBALL 90 THE RETURN OF EARL? 90
PURESIM BASEBALL 90 CACTUS LEAGUE INTERACTIVE BASEBALL 90

BY ROB SMOLKA



HIGH HEAT BASEBALL 2000

3DO

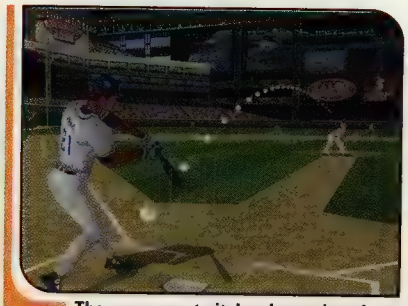
ONE OF LAST YEAR'S BETTER EFFORTS IS BACK FOR ITS SOPHOMORE SEASON — AND DEVELOPER TEAM .366 IS PROMISING ALL KINDS OF ENHANCEMENTS.

The battle for baseball supremacy in 1998 (and bear in mind we're talking quality here, not sales figures) was won by a relatively unknown development team by the name of Team .366. Its debut title, *High Heat Baseball 1999*, may not have delivered all of the features that many fans craved, and it wasn't as *pretty* as some of the others, but when push came to shove, the upstarts got it right where it counted – on the field. No other title last year felt like a game of real baseball the way *High Heat* did, with its brilliant pitcher-batter interface, smooth fielding control, smart-as-a-whip artificial intelligence, and very acceptable statistical outcomes for an arcade-style game. Now Team .366 is ready to do it again with its incredibly ambitious follow-up, *High Heat Baseball 2000*.

Last year's game had absolutely gorgeous 3D stadiums, but the players were very two-dimensional. So the biggest visual enhancement made to *High Heat 2000* has been the move to full 3D-polgonal players — and the results have been well worth the effort. The solid player models and new animations, such as jack-knifing out of the way of an inside pitch, give *High Heat 2000* a much more refined appearance. The players will even have changing facial expressions, although there are no real faces, a la Microsoft's game (see page 85).



The new polygonal players look sharp, and getting to play in a beautifully rendered, classic stadium like The Polo Grounds is an added bonus.



The same great pitcher-batter interface from last year is back with some great enhancements. Now you can see the strike zone and the path of the ball as it crosses the plate.

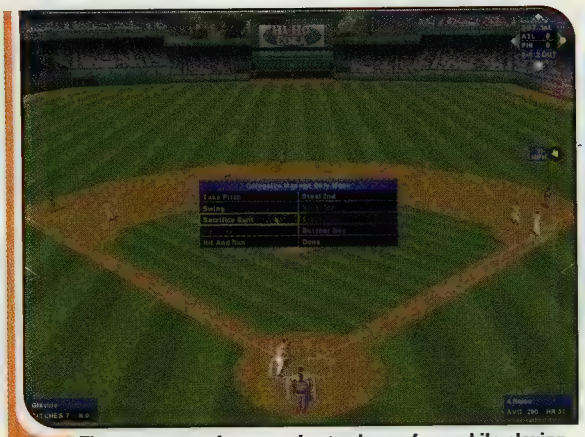
The 37 stadiums (including the classic Ebbetts Fields and the Polo Grounds, the new parks in Seattle, Houston, and Milwaukee, and a couple of minor league parks, Modesto and Nashville) have been improved too, and look sweet as candy. Replays, which were limited to just home runs last year, have been greatly expanded upon. You'll be able to set the auto-replay feature to off, home runs only, few, or many, but you'll also be able to pause the game and check out any play from an immense variety of angles. One final note on the graphics; while 3D acceleration will be supported to full effect, even the software mode looks very good this year, unlike the hideous graphics that those without hardware had to endure in last year's game.

The laid-back announcer of the San Francisco Giants, Ted Robinson, is back for the play-by-play calls, and his role has been greatly expanded, with nearly twice the amount of dialogue as before. Ted will even comment on a player's previous at bat, adding a sense of continuity to the broadcast.

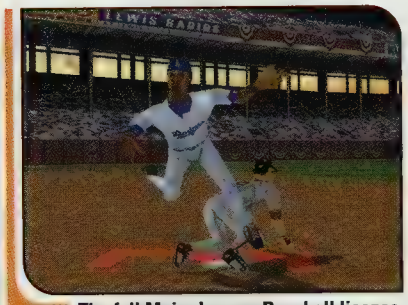
Many may be concerned that this move to full 3D could have an adverse effect on the gameplay, but there's no need to worry. The gameplay's overall feel is almost an exact duplicate of the previous version — a good thing indeed. Meanwhile, Team .366 has been adding a staggering amount of additions and corrections to the action on the field, as well as upgrading the amount of information available to the player.

Manage-only types will be pleased to know that full managerial options will be included in both one-pitch and full at-bat modes. In two-player games (which will include both managerial and action play on the same computer, or via LAN, modem or Internet), the difficulty level of each can be set independently. With the touch of a key you'll be able to view pertinent player information, such as career, last season, and current season stats, base running info, and the versus left and right breakdown for both the pitcher and batter. You can also call up the status of the relievers warming up in your bullpen, which is a new feature this year, although it can be toggled off if you don't want to be bothered.

Last year's *High Heat* had one of the best pitcher-batter interfaces, and some interesting touches have been added this year, which should make it even better. "One of the things people asked us about last year was whether we had a biased strike zone based on whether the pitcher was a star or not," says Mark Dickenson, director of the project. "We did; so Greg Maddux had a better strike zone than other pitchers. So what you can do now is see the normal strike zone and the biased strike zone. One of the other things we've added that you



There are several new angles to choose from while playing the game. This one shows you the whole field and is ideal for playing in manage-only mode.



The full Major League Baseball license is in place this year, so your favorite team will feature authentic uniforms and team names.

can turn on or off at the beginning of the game is a variable umpire."

Depending on which umpire is behind the plate, the strike zone will be slightly different; one may favor the inside corner while another may set up outside and give the wide strike. Another cool new twist is being able to see the pitch path. This will show you where the pitch crosses the strike zone as it is currently in effect (based on pitcher and umpire adjustments).

All of the base-running kinks have been worked out of the engine, and the inclusion of throwing errors, passed balls, and wild pitches should make the on-field play more realistic. "You'll have to be more careful running the bases now, because the players do a good job of backing up plays on throwing errors," says Dickenson. The difficulty levels have been tweaked too, and can be adjusted before each game. "This year MVP level is a natural growth from All-Star level. Last year MVP was for the super player only," says Dickenson.

Perhaps the most exciting new feature in the upcoming game is the career mode. This thing is as deep as the Mariana Trench, with three levels of minor leagues to juggle on top of your major league roster. You can use the current Major League team rosters, dump all the players in a pool and redraft, or draft up a league from an entirely fictional group of players and guide your franchise through a virtually unlimited number of seasons. Players will improve or decline based on their age and potential, and you'll need to decide which minor leaguers to promote, release, and give playing time to.

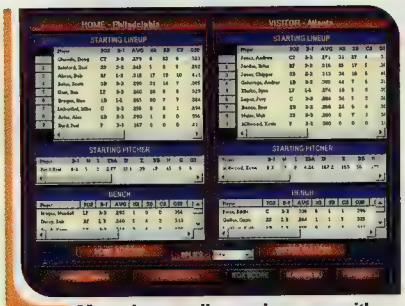
"The minor leagues will have one lineup for each of your levels," says Dickenson. "It's very important because the guy that you choose to be in the lineup is the guy that's going to get the most gameplay. The more gameplay, the better they get, the faster they reach their potential, and the more accurate your scouting reports will become. The reports give you some very basic content such as hitting ability, power, plate patience, base running and fielding. For pitchers you'll have arm strength, control, stuff, endurance, and his pitches," says Dickenson. You can also keep your eye on the full assortment of stats and leader boards to see how your lower level players are really progressing if you don't trust your scouts.

There won't be an amateur or free agent draft, but at the end of each season, a new crop will replace the players in your rookie league that haven't been promoted. Free agents will evolve naturally as veterans are squeezed off rosters to make way for the young guys. If no one picks up a player during a season, he'll most likely retire.

Trading can involve as many as three players per side, and different levels of players can be mixed and matched. The computer managers will offer and consider trade proposals; they'll be shrewd and nearly impossible to swindle, unless you turn that particular feature off.

Box scores and league reports are greatly enhanced over the minimal feedback of last year. A new game summary feature will break down every pitch or play (if in one-pitch mode) and provide more detail than you might ever want to know. There will also be a News section, broken down into different areas to track in-season news, awards, outstanding performances and career milestones. In-season news will cover trades, injuries (there will be no career ending injuries but they may carry over into the next season), player signings, cuts, and retirements. The awards section will list things like Hall of Fame inductees (there won't be a five-year waiting period and stats that are generated by the game will be added to real players' already existing stats), MVP and Cy Young winners. The performance and career milestone section will keep track of things like high strikeout games, hitting for the cycle, reaching 400 career home runs, etc. In other words, stat freaks will have plenty to savor.

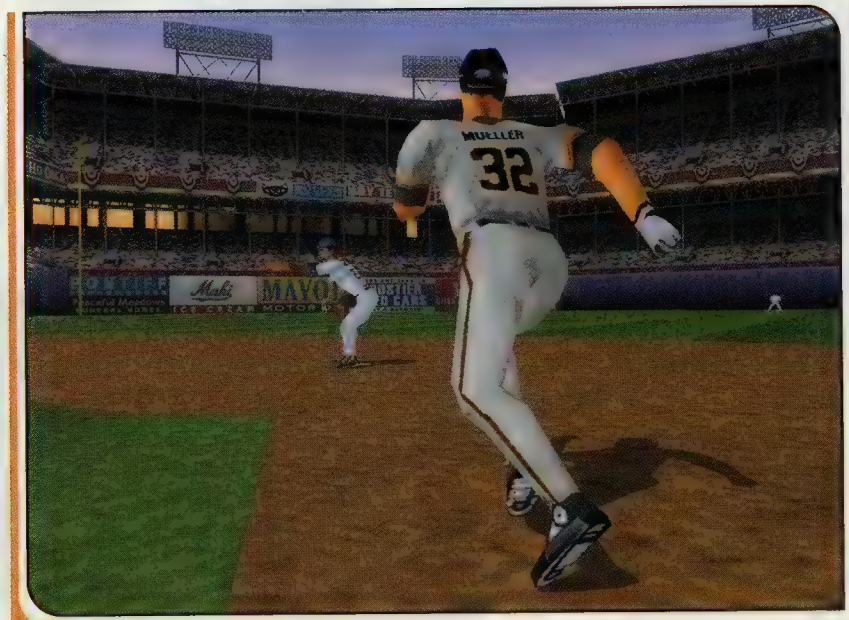
The alpha version we've been playing is an early indicator that *High Heat Baseball 2000* is on track to be not only the best baseball game of this season, but possibly of all time. *High Heat 2000* will also include the full MLB license (so team names and colors will be correct this year), and little touches are constantly being added (like 3D sound support using EAX). If all goes according to plan, there are going to be a lot of smiles on the faces of PC baseball fans this season.



Managing your lineups is a snap with the drag-and-drop interface. You'll also have three levels of minor leagues to oversee if you're playing in career mode.

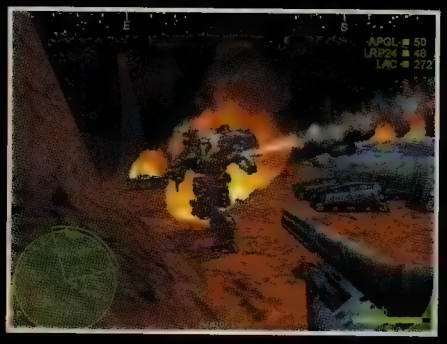


The slick new interface makes navigating the game screens easy. Difficulty levels can be set individually to even the odds for non-experienced players.

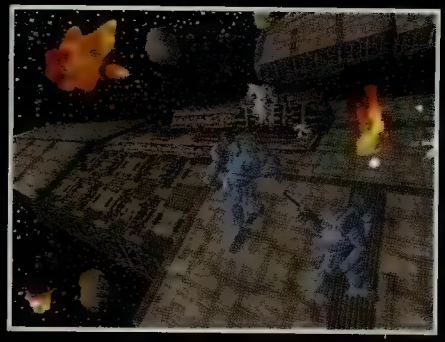


Replays were limited to home runs only last year; now you'll be able to move the camera anywhere you like to relive those Kodak moments.

DEEPER SPECIAL OPS STEALTH-SQUAD COMBAT IN 40 INDOOR/OUTDOOR MISSIONS.



HARSHER BATTLES IN HOSTILE SCI-FI CONDITIONS – FROM OUTER SPACE TO SWAMP ZONES.



FASTER COMBAT ACTION WITH ACTIVISION'S ALL-NEW DARK SIDE ENGINE.



HEAVY PRAISE

"THE GIANT ROBOT CRAZE IS ABOUT TO STRIKE AGAIN . . . ACTIVISION HAS LISTENED AND DELIVERED."

—*PC GAMER*

"ACTIVISION'S HEAVY GEAR 2 PROMISES TO SURPASS THEIR PREVIOUS HIT, MECHWARRIOR 2. . .THIS GAME LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO BE ONE OF *THE* GAMES TO HAVE FOR 1999."

—*SHOCKED.NET*

"IF THE DEMO JUST HINTS AT WHAT THE FINAL PRODUCT WILL BE LIKE, HEAVY GEAR 2 WILL STOMP THE COMPETITION WITH ITS SUPER-CHARGED GAMEPLAY AND CUTTING-EDGE GRAPHICS."

—*ADRENALINE VAULT*

"HEAVY GEAR II LOOKS TO BE THE NEXT BIG LEAP FORWARD IN THE MECHANIZED-COMBAT GENRE."

—*PC GAMES*

"HEAVY GEAR II . . .(IS) PUSHING THE TECHNICAL STATE OF THE ART."

—*COMPUTER GAMING WORLD*

"ALL ACTION AND SIM FANS SHOULD RUN OUT AND GET THIS SOON-TO-BE GEM. DON'T TAKE MY WORD FOR IT, GO AND DOWNLOAD THE DEMO AND SEE IT FOR YOURSELF."

—*3D GAMING WORLD*

© 1998, 1999 Dream Pod 9, Inc. and Target Games, AB. Used by the HEAVY GEAR™ universe created and owned by Dream Pod 9, Inc. Activision is a registered trademark of Activision, Inc. © 1998, 1999 Activision, Inc. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and trade names are properties of their respective owners.

ACTIVISION®

"(HEAVY GEAR II'S) GRAPHICS ENGINE. . . SOLICITS COMMENTS THAT START WITH THE PHRASE, 'OH MY GOD!' "
—ADRENALINE VAULT



HEAVY GEAR II

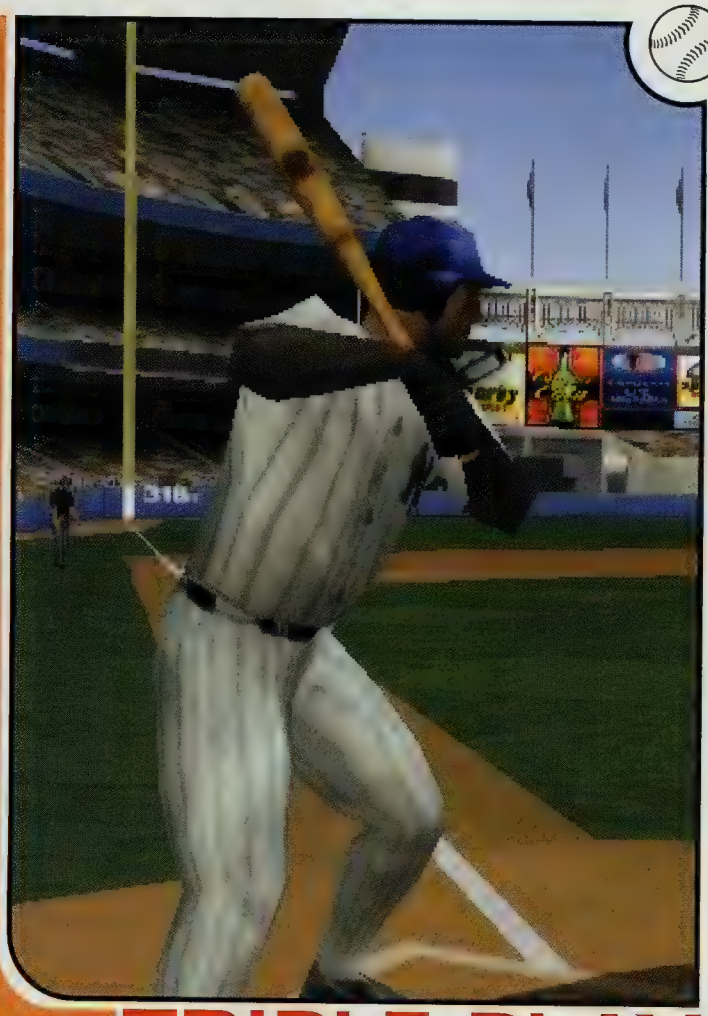
REBUILT FROM THE BATTLEGROUND UP.

OFFICIAL HEAVY GEAR UNIVERSE

WWW.ACTIVISION.COM

SoftwareForPCs.com

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #022



TRIPLE PLAY 2000

ELECTRONIC ARTS

POPULAR FAVORITE EA SPORTS IS BACK FOR ANOTHER SEASON, AND THIS YEAR'S TRIPLE PLAY IS SWINGING HARDER THAN EVER BEFORE.

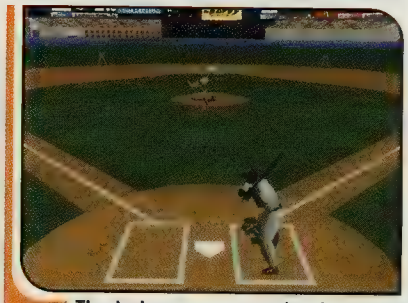
EA Sports' Triple Play series has never been about pleasing the baseball grognards. What this series has always done best is letting the arcade gamer enjoy the atmosphere and excitement of the game, without having to know a lot about the inner workings of the sport. Last year's incarnation was no exception, but the game was riddled with poor AI, bugs, and control problems that sapped a lot of the fun right out of it. The design team recognized these shortcomings, and is now well on its way toward rectifying those mistakes with *Triple Play 2000*.

At the top of the list of corrections was making sure the frame rate remained high at all times. Where this proves most useful is in the pitcher-batter interface. According to Producer Mark Dobratz, "It really shows in the batting. We moved from a vague to a very precise feel. You'll see a lot more foul balls, and a huge variety of hits." As last year's game lacked crucial elements of baseball like doubles or triples, this is very good news.

Fielding will benefit from the improved frame rate too, and the designers are implementing other corrections to smooth out this part of the game. "We worked a long time on the cameras," says Dobratz. "We've redone the fielder identification, we've redone the ball target, and we've redone the cameras so that they show more of what you want to see."

Great graphics and sound have always been the hallmarks of the Triple Play series, and you can bet that these two elements are getting some attention this year. The look of the game, of both the player models and the stadiums, is much cleaner than before, and some new animations, most notably of the players' faces, have been added. Says Dobratz, "Most of the new animations have to do with adding a little more life to the players in the game; a little more reaction to the events as they happen on the field, rather than the automaton reactions." The stadiums will be more alive too, with more involved crowds, real-time scoreboards, and park specific animations such as Kansas City's waterfalls.

Jim Hughson and Buck Martinez will return to call the games. New commentary has been added to the huge base they've already compiled, but Dobratz says it will sound a lot better this year. "We put a lot of attention into the timing of speech, and you won't find those long delays this time," he says.



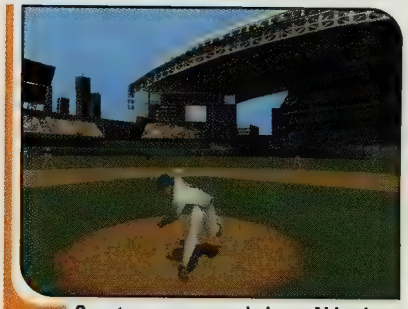
The designers assure us that there will be doubles and triples aplenty in *Triple Play 2000*, courtesy of enhanced frame rates and more precise batting control.

In order for even an arcade-style baseball game to be worth playing, the artificial intelligence has to act, well, intelligently. This was one of *Triple Play 99*'s biggest failings, and Dobratz knew it needed to be fixed. "The CPU-controlled players and managers will prove to be much smarter this year than they were last year," he says. "Obviously, we didn't intend to make players do the un-baseball-like things; they were the result of complex bugs or AI conflicts that have literally taken months to tune out of the game. We've spent time with every area of the AI this year, fixing, tuning, and polishing."

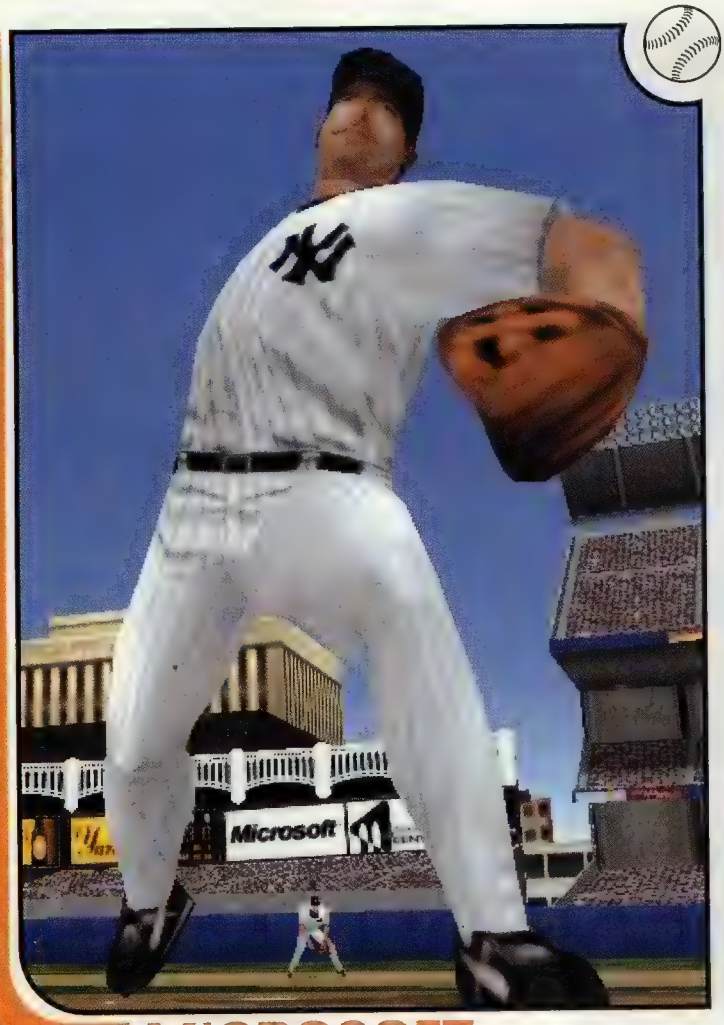
The limited career mode will return, but it won't see any changes — there's still no aging effects or generated players. Dobratz feels that this is what people want. "It's a conscious decision to let people play with the players they see in our game," he says.

An exciting new addition in this year's version will be action play over the Internet. We haven't had a chance to test this feature yet, but Dobratz tells us that it's so far working well over a regular modem connection. This action play, however, comes at the expense of managerial options. The wonderfully intricate manager controls of last year have been removed completely. Says Dobratz, "It's taken such a huge effort to make the Internet action play happen that we had to concentrate on that at the expense of manager mode."

A new home run challenge format (similar to the old Home Run Derby television show from the 1950s where players compete one-on-one) and a way to play the game just using the mouse round out the major changes. With the necessary fixes in place, *Triple Play 2000* could turn out to be a lot of fun for gamers who are looking for a fun day out at the virtual ballpark.



Smarter manager and player AI is also promised this year. Hopefully, we won't see any more mindless pitching moves or base-running blunders.



MICROSOFT BASEBALL 2000

MICROSOFT

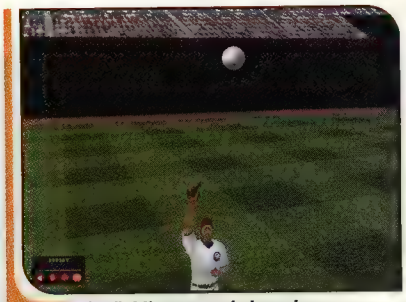
AFTER AN UNINSPIRING DEBUT, MICROSOFT IS HOPING TO CRACK THE BASEBALL MARKET ON ITS SECOND ATTEMPT — AND AT A PRICE THAT'S RIGHT!

From the eerily realistic faces of many of the star players to the authentic recreations of the big league stadiums, *Microsoft Baseball 3D* treated gamers to a day at the ballpark that rivaled a visit to the real thing — it was only when those same gamers took gamepad in hand that the pretty facade began to show its cracks. Poor fielding controls, dubious artificial intelligence, and some wacky design decisions easily overpowered the pretty visuals, and relegated it to the minor leagues. Developer WizBang! listened to the complaints, and it looks like some valuable lessons have been learned; the beta version of *Microsoft Baseball 2000* we've been playing is showing enormous gameplay improvements over its predecessor while retaining all the pretty visuals.



A lot of work went into making sure the player speed ratings are factored correctly. The outfielder's arm strengths have also been implemented properly.

Requiring hardware accelerators for *Baseball 3D* did wonders for the look of the game but it may have alienated a lot of potential buyers. This philosophy was scrapped for *Baseball 2000* — the game will still boast 3D acceleration, but not require it. Amazingly, the graphics don't seem to have suffered due to this change in tack, and still look great. All of the little between-play animations are still there too (such as the pitcher adjusting his cap between pitches), but now you can bypass them with a click of a controller button, significantly speeding up the games.



The fielding controls have been improved immensely in this year's version, and the disorienting camera work has been eliminated.

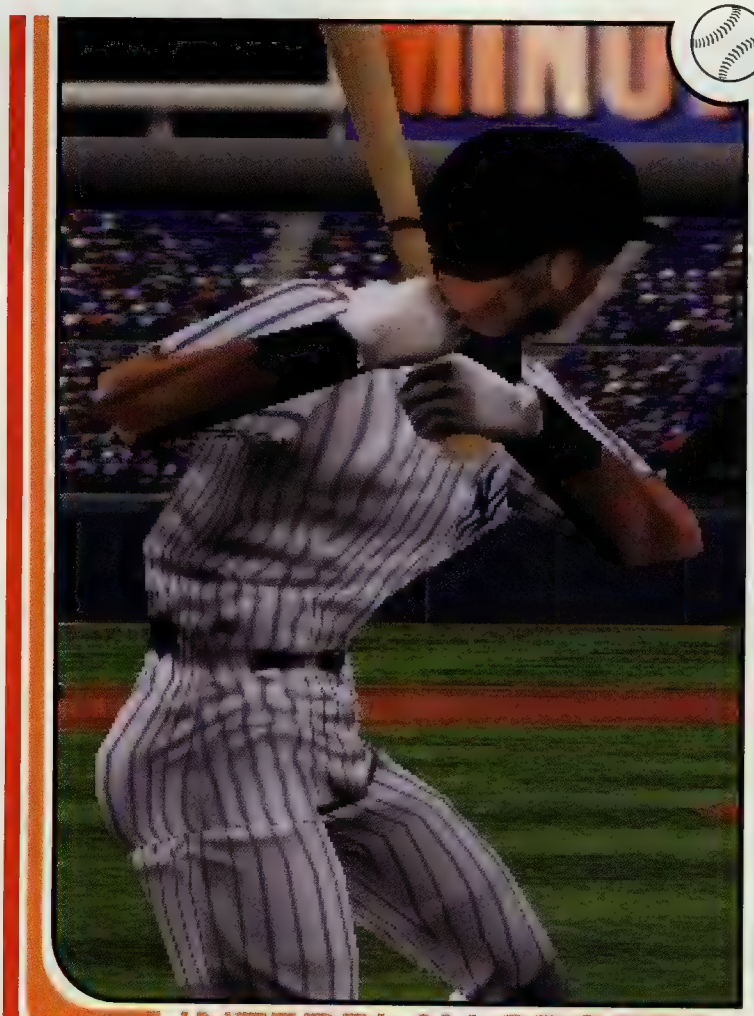
More importantly, of course, *Microsoft Baseball 2000* is promising greatly enhanced gameplay, in the form of countless tweaks and new additions. Control settings and difficulty levels can now be set for each player, for example. The batting and pitching interface is similar to last year, but the difficulty levels have been much more finely tuned. An intermediate level has been added to bridge the gap between beginner and expert. There's a lot more flexibility now, unlike the "feast or famine" difficulty levels of last year.

The fielding has been totally revamped, and the game is much more fun to play. The camera no longer disorients the player by swinging behind the fielder when the throw is about to be made. Auto-fielding and throwing are now independent, and the computer will assist the player when going after the ball. "When the ball is first hit, the AI will move the fielder in the right direction for a certain period of time, depending on the difficulty level you have set," says Eric Straub, executive producer on the game.

Improved AI is also promised, although that will have to be judged when the game ships. What we can vouch for is the large improvement in the relative speed of the events taking place on the diamond. "We're almost embarrassed to admit it, but there was a bug in that we had speed ratings for all the different players but we weren't respecting it, so every player ran the bases slowly," says Straub. This has been fixed, and other adjustments include the arm strength of the players, so the outfielders no longer all have cannons for arms. The physics have been tuned up too, so there won't be any more of those ground balls that defy the laws of friction.

Numerous additional touches include a home run derby, different contact sounds, the ability to make substitutions within the game itself, and play-by-play from Thom Brennaman of the Arizona Diamondbacks. Sadly, though, there will be no managerial or Internet play features.

This is an arcade baseball game, pure and simple. That's fine, of course, so long as the gameplay keeps you coming back for more — and our experience with the preview version suggests it will do just that. Microsoft is also going for the mass-market crowd with this one, opting for a retail price of just $19.99. John Rodman, the game's product manager, wants to assure people that low price doesn't equate to low quality. "This is not a cheap game," he says. "This is not a game that we are taking lightly or treating lightly. We want everyone who buys this game to come away thinking, 'Wow, I can't believe I got all this for 20 bucks'."



INTERPLAY SPORTS BASEBALL EDITION 2000

INTERPLAY

INTERPLAY HAS YET TO PROVE ITSELF OUT ON THE DIAMOND, BUT THIS COULD BE THE COMPANY'S BREAKOUT SEASON.

VR Baseball 2000 from VR Sports (the old moniker for this series and developer), missed the boat last year when it appeared right at the end of the baseball season. So now, some five months later, the newly named Interplay Sports is hoping to take advantage of an opening day release with (deep breath) *Interplay Sports Baseball Edition 2000.*

With the limited time between versions, most of the work will be in the graphics department. Even the game's new producer, Shawn Jacoby, had problems with the look of the old *Messiah* engine-driven game. "The players all walked like zombies and squatted down after they threw the ball," he says. "When I took over the project, I said, 'That's one of the first things we're changing, after the stadiums'."

So what's being done with the stadiums? Quite a bit actually, according to Jacoby. "We've doubled the polygon count and put a higher res texture in. The crowd will be animated and tied in with the audio, and we'll have five different levels of crowd animation." The early version that we've been playing around with definitely shows clear improvements over last year's bland ballparks.

The crowd will also be dynamic, both during individual games and during the course of a season. If you're down by a lot of runs in the late innings, the crowd will begin to thin out. If you're not doing well in the standings, your attendance will suffer. Other animations will include fireworks when the home team hits home runs, waving flags, and an animated "jumbotron" video screen.

The poor animations that hampered the otherwise good-looking player models are getting a much-neeed overhaul, too. There will be more than 750 new motion-captured moves incorporated, including 15 to 20 unique pitching motions (featuring those of Roger Clemens and Hideo Nomo, among others) and a host of specific batting stances. Says Jacoby, "We had a couple of minor leaguers that were really good at imitating, but we also had Darrin Erstad which was even better. He's like a mimic of anybody."

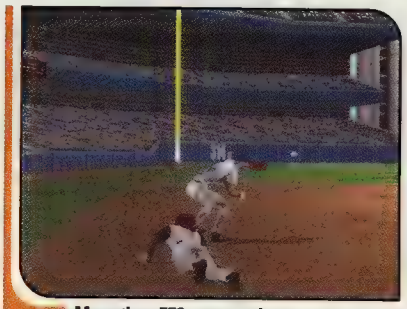
The development schedule was not entirely devoted to the visuals, however. Last year's competent AI has been worked on even further. "The guy who is doing the AI this year is just a huge baseball purist," says Jacoby. "He spent three days just fixing the double switch. Guys aren't tagging up on the third out anymore like they used to. All of the stat bugs have been fixed too."

The player ratings have been adjusted; pitchers will throw the correct ratio of balls and strikes, and the speed of the players on the base paths and in the field should create results that are much closer to reality. A new fielder positioning system allows for much deeper on-field strategy, and the fielding assist feature has been tweaked. "We adjusted that to where we're almost going to be able to totally shut it off," says Jacoby. "It will be a lot better than what it was last year." One of the other major flaws of last year's game that will also be fixed is the stealing; you'll actually be able to swipe a base now.

Some additional elements will flesh out the game, including a play-by-play announcer (it's no-one you'll recognize, but at least he's enthusiastic), a player creation utility, and a Tournament mode that lets you pit eight teams against each other in a round-robin event. Interplay is also promising to provide downloadable roster updates during the season, something it failed to deliver on last year.

Baseball Edition 2000 has a decent shot at being a contender this year, at least when it comes to arcade action. The game already looks a lot better than it did last season, and with the multitude of fixes, there's a good chance it will appeal to the more demanding simulation crowd, too.

The big news, though, is what's in store for the future of this series. The long-term plan is to scrap the Messiah engine, incorporate the brilliant *Diamond Mind Baseball* statistical engine, and add features such as career play to make the game a full-fledged simulation. Stay tuned....



More than 750 new motion-capture moves have been added to *Baseball Edition 2000* to make the players' actions on the field much more convincing.



The refurbished stadiums are a major improvement over the gloomy parks of last year. Animation, such as fireworks, will help bring the stadiums to life.

STRATEGIZE. COLONIZE. DOMINATE. ERADICATE.

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO RULE THIS GALAXY.



FEDERATION
A well-balanced universal power.

KLINGON
An aggressive military makes up for their lack in tact.

ROMULAN
The enigma of the universe, they are smooth and deadly.

FERENGI
Masters of economics, but watch out. They're tricky!

CARDASSIAN
Their ruthlessness, efficiency and stealth make for a lethal combination.

Building an empire takes time. You need to be diplomatic, technologically advanced, and stealthy. And sometimes, war is the only solution. You choose from one of the five major alliances. You'll get all their strengths. All their weaknesses. And every decision matters.



Allocate technology resources

Engage in 3-D tactical combat

Control covert operations

Oversee empire growth and progress

BIRTH OF THE FEDERATION™

From the company that brought you Civilization® II and Masters of Orion II™

STAR TREK® THE NEXT GENERATION

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

HASBRO Interactive

MICROPROSE®
www.microprose.com

Star Trek: The Next Generation ™ & ©1999 Paramount Pictures. All Rights Reserved. Used under license. Star Trek and related marks are trademarks of Paramount Pictures. ©1999 Hasbro Interactive. All Rights Reserved. MicroProse, Hasbro Interactive, and the Hasbro Interactive logo are trademarks of Hasbro or its affiliates. All other trademarks are the property of their respective holders.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #508


WE CHALLENGE NOT
ONLY WHAT YOU KNOW,
BUT WHO YOU ARE.
Prepare for college and beyond in the U.S. Navy. You can earn up to $40,000 for college through the Navy College Fund and the Montgomery G.I. Bill. You can also qualify for bonuses to help secure your future. And, most important, develop the honor, courage, and commitment to overcome any obstacle. Call 1-800-USA-NAVY, or visit our web site at www.navyjobs.com.
NAVY
LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN.

AROUND THE BASES

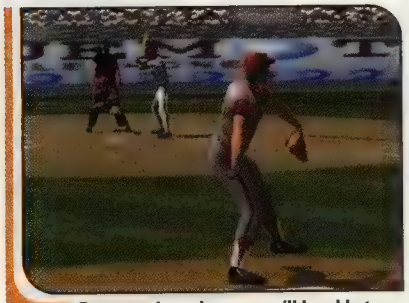
THERE'S MUCH MORE TO THE 1999 SEASON THAN JUST THE BIG-NAME TITLES PREVIEWED IN-DEPTH THIS MONTH — THERE'S A WHOLE SLEW OF GAMES THAT SHOULD MAKE THIS YEAR ONE OF THE BIGGEST YET FOR PC BASEBALL.

HARDBALL 6 — 2000 EDITION

Bad news for fans of this series: the latest addition to the franchise won't be a whole new game — just a re-release of *Hardball 6* with updated statistics and rosters. At the time of its release, *Hardball 6* was the only game to offer arcade play over the Internet (which it did pretty well), but the less-than-stellar graphics, awkward fielding, and strange statistical results hurt what could have been a great game. This new update is available to previous owners free of charge at Accolade's website (*www.accolade.com*), and newcomers can pick up the full game for $20.

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2000

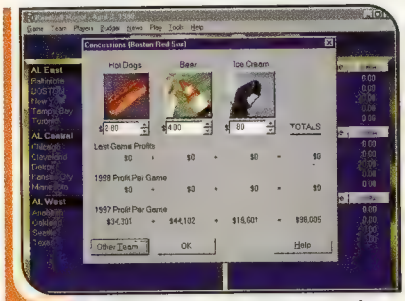
Acclaim has been difficult to pin down regarding this game's on-again, off-again release on the PC. As it stands at press time, the company says the game will *not* be coming out, but we're still not convinced that this is the final word. It would be a shame if this turned out to be the case though, because the Nintendo 64 version has a lot of innovative features that the PC baseball crowd would love to get their hands on. Check the game out for yourself at *www.acclaim-sports.com/asb2k/index.html.*



For now, the only way you'll be able to play *All-Star Baseball 2000* is to buy a Nintendo 64. Hopefully, Acclaim will see the light and give us a PC version too.

BASEBALL MOGUL 99

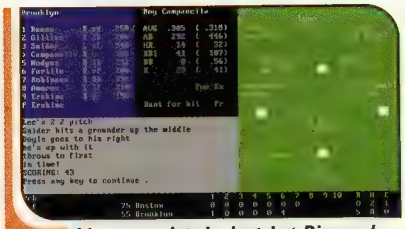
From Infinite Monkey Systems comes the follow up to its surprise hit of last year, *Baseball Mogul.* There are no fancy graphics here — just a lot of depth and strategy as you assume the role of both field skipper and General Manager of your favorite Major League team. Once again you'll be able to decide everything from the starting line-up and TV contracts to the price of admission tickets and hot dogs — It's definitely a worthwhile game for any baseball fan that has ever uttered the words, "I could do better than that!" while watching the behind-the-scenes shenanigans of their favorite team. See *www.imonkey.com/ bbmogul99.htm* for more details.



Besides managing your rosters and lineups, you'll have to make decisions about concession stand prices and television broadcasting options in *Baseball Mogul 99.*

DIAMOND MIND BASEBALL

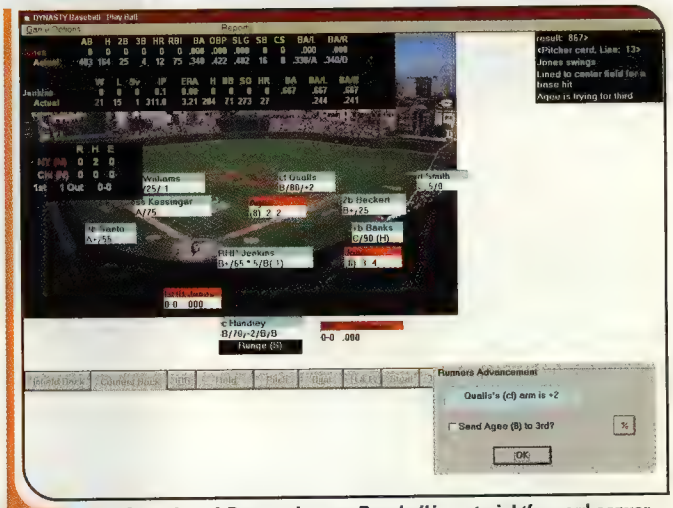
If you're looking for one of the most accurate and in-depth baseball games around, look no further than *Diamond Mind Baseball.* The latest version (7.0d) adds a load of great new features, and you'll be amazed at the smarts displayed by the computer manager. This text-only DOS-based game does take a lot of patience to get to grips with; the interface isn't the most intuitive you'll find, but it's well worth the effort. The good news is that the upcoming version will be for Windows 95, which should go a long way toward making it more user-friendly. Intriguingly, Interplay Sports recently acquired the Diamond Mind license and will be using the game's code in future iterations of its baseball titles. It'll be some time before we see the fruits of that deal, so in the meantime visit the company's website (*www.diamond-mind.com)* to order the game and to get the latest information on the new version.



It's not much to look at, but *Diamond Mind Baseball* delivers one of the best baseball simulation engines around.

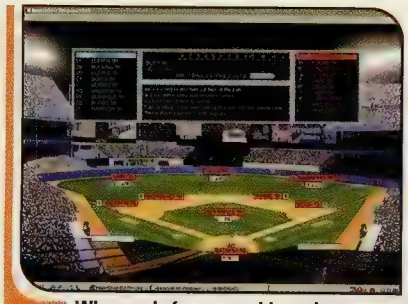
DYNASTY LEAGUE BASEBALL

From the designer of the excellent *Pursue the Pennant* board game comes *Dynasty League Baseball.* The computer version is a straightforward conversion of the board game of the same name, so you'll either have to manage both teams yourself or challenge a buddy to a game. That said, this is an excellent game that deserves a look from those who fondly remember their days spent with dice, charts, and player cards. To order, head on over to *www.designdepot.com/.*



The PC version of *Dynasty League Baseball* is a straightforward conversion of the board game, which lets you enjoy the game without having to strain your eyes looking up results on the board game's charts.

THE RACE FOR THE PENNANT



Who needs fancy graphics when you've got the legendary Ernie Harwell along to call the game?

BASEBALL FOR WINDOWS

This text-based game has a couple of features that make it stand out from the others: the voice of Ernie Harwell to call the games and the ability to import stats from the Bill James baseball encyclopedia which Miller Associates sells separately. The game has reached version 5.0, and with each new iteration more features are added into the basic game (which users used to have to purchase separately). *Baseball for Windows* is one of the more flexible baseball gaming systems available, but this flexibility comes at the cost of complexity. The online manual can be very vague about how to accomplish certain tasks, and the various parts of the program are not as well integrated as they should be, causing a lot of frustration for the new user. If you're willing to invest the time, though, you'll find a game that will satisfy the most demanding of baseball fans. Check out *www0.delphi.com/fanpark/homeplat.html* for more info.



Put away those player cards and charts; the Windows version of *Strat-O-Matic* baseball will take care of all the work while you enjoy the game.

STRAT-O-MATIC BASEBALL

Strat-O-Matic is one of the true legends of baseball boardgaming, and the company's computer version of its venerable tabletop game carries on the tradition quite well. Simulation fans will be pleased to know that this mostly text-based game (there are some moving graphics during the games but they're rudimentary at best) produces some of the most accurate statistics you'll find. The computer manager is more than competent when running his club, and the game has a lot of well-integrated features. If you want, you can even use your old card sets to play the game. The latest version (4.0) of *Strat-O-Matic* for Windows should be available by the time you read this, so head on over to *www.strat-o-matic.com* to download the demo or to order this excellent little game.

FULL COUNT BASEBALL

Lance Haffner Games has been making high-quality simulations for nearly every sport imaginable since 1983. There are very few frills in these games, but if you want to manage one of your favorite teams from the past, there's a good chance that Full Count Baseball can deliver; the game comes complete with every pennant winner and World Series team from 1901 to 1992! There's no demo available, but if you want to give the game a try head on over to *www.lhgames.com* and place your order.



Ah, computer graphics in the late 1980s. *Earl Weaver Baseball* is considered a true classic, and the original designer, Eddie Dombrower, is working on an updated version.

THE RETURN OF EARL?

Eddie Dombrower, the designer of the original *Earl Weaver Baseball*, has resurfaced after a long absence to announce that he will be working on an updated version of his classic design. Amiga computer users in the late 1980s were treated to one of the greatest baseball games ever seen, and many feel that no game released since has matched the charm and playability of old *Earl*. A PC version was released shortly after, but it made little impact, as the PCs of the time were woefully inadequate, and couldn't match the glitz and glitter of the Amiga version. Dombrower is saying that the update will be based heavily on the old code, but will take advantage of the Windows operating system; there will be graphics, but they're not expected to match the level of the big-league heavy hitters. No timetable has been set for when the game will see the light of day, but check out our new, improved website at *www.pcgamer.com* for any breaking news.



This project is a labor of love for Shaun Sullivan. Visit his website and sign up to receive his newsletter to keep apprised of *PureSim Baseball*'s progress.

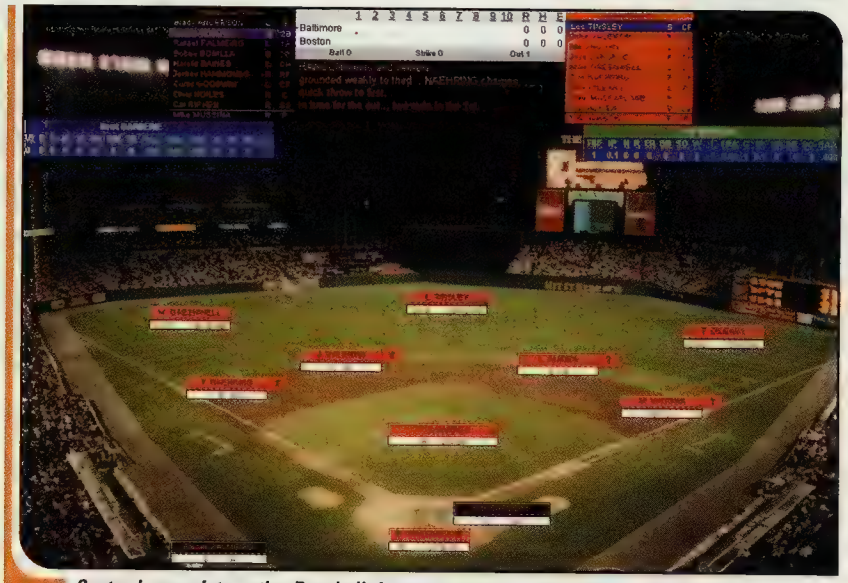
PURESIM BASEBALL

Best known for his utilities for *Sierra's Front Page Sports: Baseball* games, Shaun Sullivan is working on a game of his own that has a lot of baseball simulation fans excited. *PureSim Baseball* is the game that Sullivan has always wanted to play, and will include a full career mode. It's still in the early stages of development at the time of this writing, so check out Sullivan's website to find out more details on the game and when it will be ready: *www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Pines/4187/index.html*.

CACTUS LEAGUE INTERACTIVE BASEBALL

This text-based simulation has a lot of appealing elements that come with the basic game package. The play-by-play descriptions are some of the best in the business, and will let you know if players are on hitting streaks, how they performed against their opponents in previous meetings, etc. Every part of the game (league management, statistics, and auto-scheduler) is very well integrated, and the computer manager conducts a very intelligent game plan. The game is a touch on the expensive side ($70), but Cactus Development adds a lot of value to the package with game-enhancing free downloads available on its website. To order, or try out the demo, head along to *www.cactusdevelopment.com*.

PCG



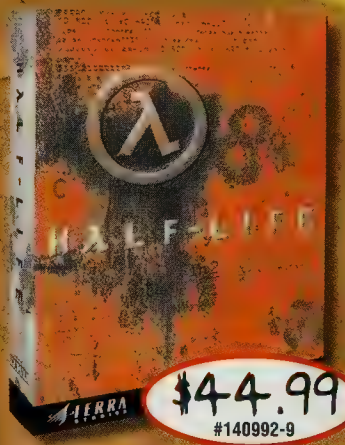
***Cactus League Interactive Baseball* plays a great game of baseball, and the play-by-play descriptions really give you the feeling that you're watching a real game.**


electronics
boutique
www.ebworld.com
CIVILIZATION
CALL TO POWER
ACTIVISION
EverQuest
Unreal
TOURNAMENT
STAR WARS
X-WING
ALLIANCE
March 99
WARNING!
Electronics Boutique disclaims all liability for parental nagging resulting from use of these products. May cause temporary deafness to the words "Shut that off!" and "I said now!" Do not eat. Do not operate while biking or surfing, or attempt to finish homework while using this product. Not for use by ferrets, parakeets, little yipitty dogs or persons allergic to major intense FUN.

electronics boutique

CD ROM ENTERTAINMENT

Strategy Guide Available!



$44.99
#140992-9

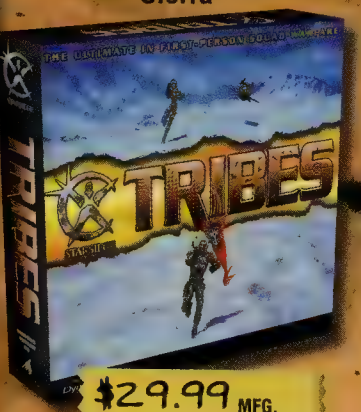
HALF-LIFE
WINDOWS CD ROM
Sierra



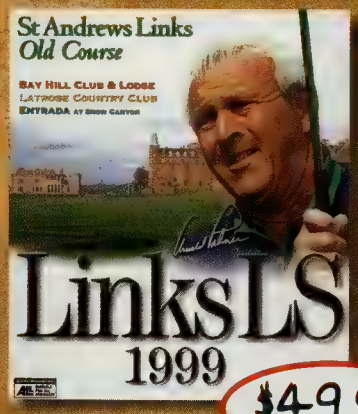
$49.99
#149360-0

STARSIEGE
WINDOWS CD ROM
Sierra

STARSIEGE
TRIBES
WINDOWS CD ROM
Sierra



$29.99 MFG. MAIL IN REBATE
-10.00
$19.99 AFTER REBATE
#152283-8



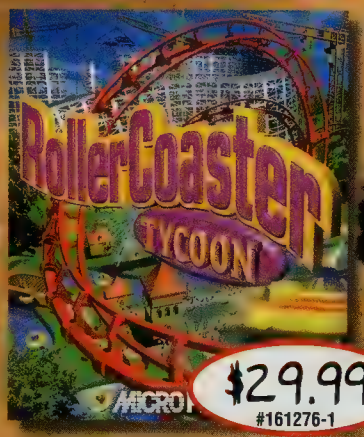
$49.99
#151563-4

LINKS LS 1999
WINDOWS CD ROM
Access



$37.99
#152555-9

AGES OF MYST
WINDOWS CD ROM
Broderbund



$29.99
#161276-1

ROLLER COASTER TYCOON
WINDOWS CD ROM
MicroProse





PANTHER DX WITH
RED BARON BUNDLE
PC
Mad Catz

$39.99
#157531-5



$29.99
#155318-9

GEX 2
WINDOWS CD ROM
Midway

39.99
#152515-3



RUSH 2 EXTREME
RACING USA
WINDOWS CD ROM
Midway



$39.99
#150583-3

XTERMINATOR
GAME PAD
PC
Kensington

WWW.EBWORLD.COM

2



$49.99
#154941-0

CIVILIZATION II CALL TO POWER
WINDOWS CD ROM
Activision



$49.99
#150309-3

HEAVY GEAR II
WINDOWS CD ROM
Activision



$39.99
#150313-5

JACK NICKLAUS 6
GOLDEN BEAR CHALLENGE
WINDOWS CD ROM
Activision

$29.99
#144428-9



SIN
WINDOWS CD ROM
Activision



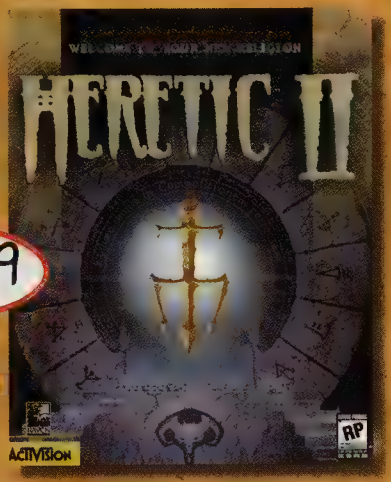
$19.99
#150306-0

SIN MISSION PACK:
WAGES OF SIN
WINDOWS CD ROM
Activision



$39.99
#161070-8

ROLLCAGE
WINDOWS CD ROM
Pygnosis



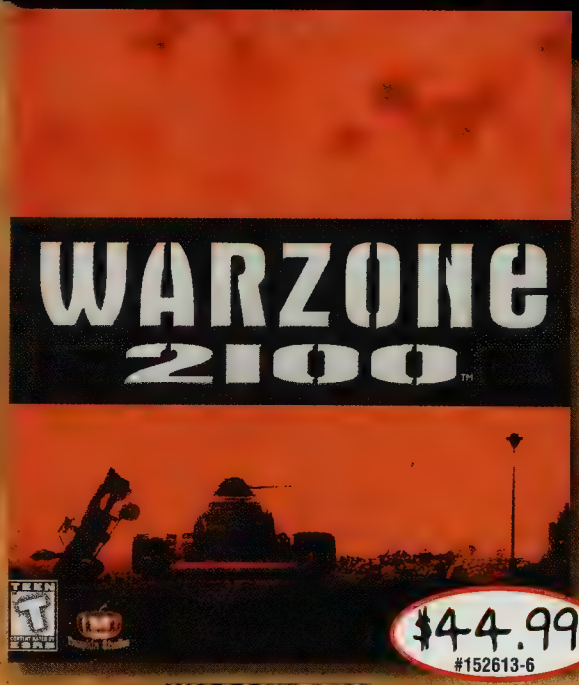
$49.99
#150311-9

HERETIC II
WINDOWS CD ROM
Activision

electronics boutique

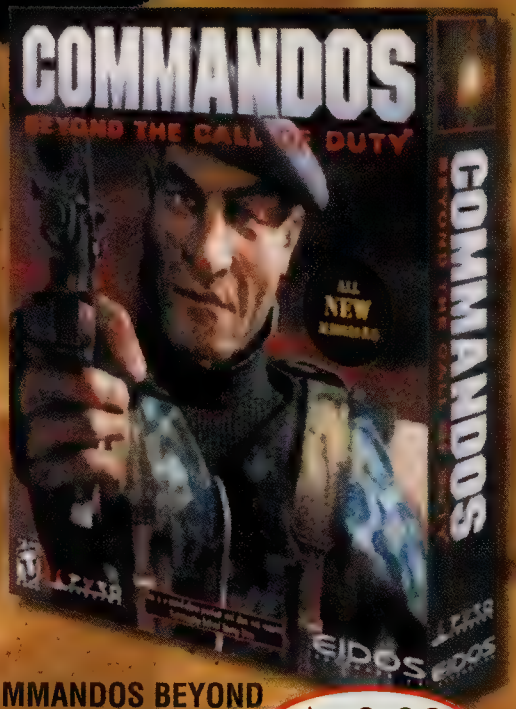
CD ROM ENTERTAINMENT

CALL 1-800-800-5166 FOR THE STORE NEAREST YOU!



$44.99
#152613-6

WARZONE 2100
WINDOWS CD ROM
Eidos Interactive



COMMANDOS BEYOND
THE CALL OF DUTY
WINDOWS CD ROM
Eidos Interactive

$29.99
#161096-3



$44.99
#158642-9

BRAVEHEART
WINDOWS CD ROM
Eidos Interactive

FINAL FANTASY.VII
WINDOWS CD ROM
Eidos Interactive

$29.99
#148576-2





GANGSTERS
WINDOWS CD ROM
Eidos Interactive

$44.99
#152617-7

TOMB RAIDER III
PC
Eidos Interactive

$39.99
#152609-4



WWW.EBWORLD.COM

electronics boutique

CD ROM ENTERTAINMENT



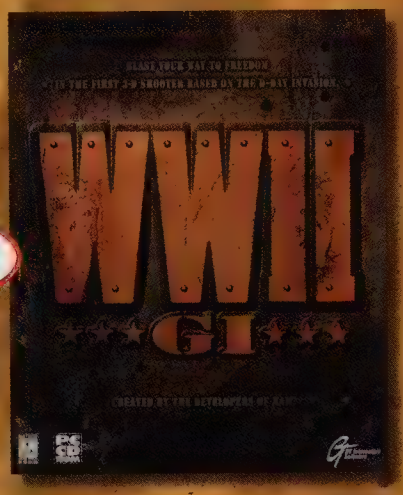
$49.99
#160539-3

UNREAL TOURNAMENT
WINDOWS CD ROM
GT Interactive



$29.99
#138530-1

UNREAL MISSION PACK
WINDOWS CD ROM
GT Interactive



$24.99
#160541-9

WW II G.I.
WINDOWS CD ROM
GT Interactive



$29.99
#136467-8

UNREAL
WINDOWS CD ROM
GT Interactive



NEW LOW PRICE!

$19.99
#136472-8

TOTAL ANNIHILATION
WINDOWS CD ROM
GT Interactive

$49.99
#158422-6

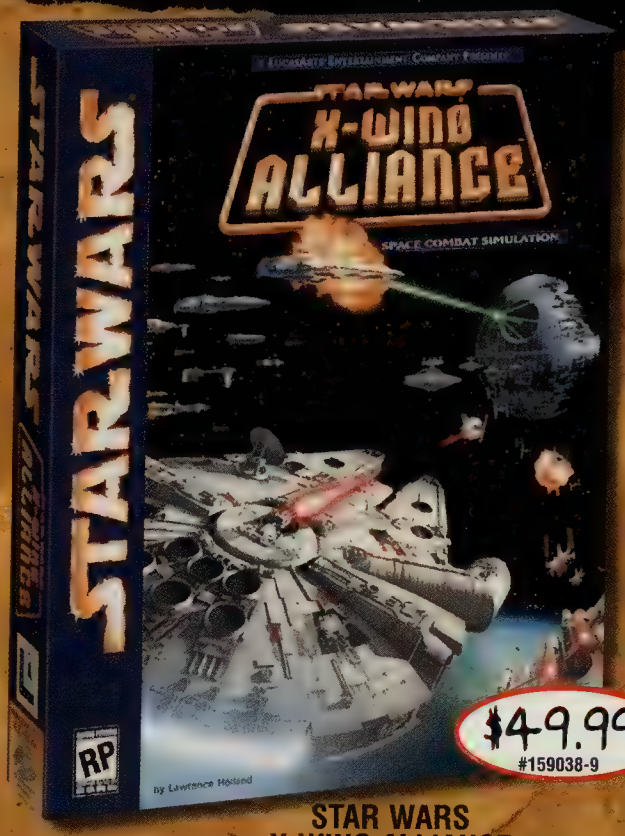


TOTAL ANNIHILATION KINGDOMS
WINDOWS CD ROM
GT Interactive

CALL 1-800-800-5166 FOR THE STORE NEAREST YOU!

electronics boutique

CD ROM ENTERTAINMENT



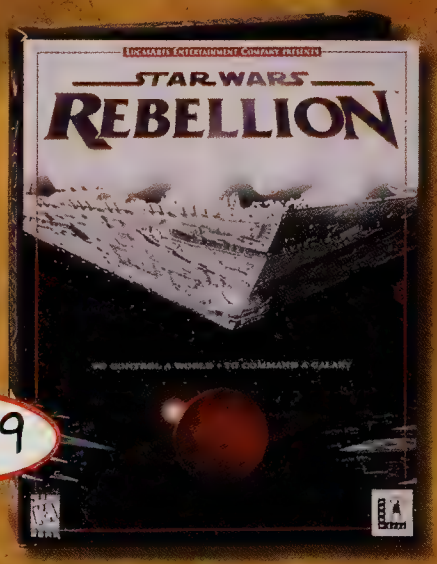
$49.99
#159038-9

STAR WARS
X-WING ALLIANCE
WINDOWS CD ROM
Lucas Arts



$49.99
#151516-2

STAR WARS
ROGUE SQUADRON
WINDOWS CD ROM
Lucas Arts



STAR WARS
REBELLION
WINDOWS CD ROM
Lucas Arts

$29.99
#136030-4



$39.99
#151523-8

STAR WARS
JEDI KNIGHT
WITH MYSTERIES
WINDOWS CD ROM
Lucas Arts



STAR WARS
BEHIND THE MAGIC
WINDOWS CD ROM
Lucas Arts

$29.99
#151526-1

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #010

Typographical errors are not the responsibility of Electronics Boutique. Not all items may appear at our outlet locations. Prices may vary in different locations. At time of printing, all products are expected to be available. Some packaging and special offers may differ. Prices and availability are subject to change. Pricing valid in U.S. only. Manufacturers' delays are not the responsibility of Electronics Boutique. ©1999 Electronics Boutique.

WWW.EBWORLD.COM

Hammy, You Can't Die! You Can't!

Ever since *PC Gamer*'s new office mascot Hammy the hamster made his magazine debut back in the March issue, we've been inundated with requests for more information about the adorable little critter. Not wishing to disappoint Hammy's swelling fan club, we now present this Hammy Update:

Since returning from his victorious tour on the Hamster Bowling circuit, Hammy has certainly risen in stature around the office. His hamster residence above Gary's desk has been augmented by the addition of a luxury clubhouse, and the whole apartment complex now boasts no less than two workout wheels! The ultimate plan is to keep adding pipes and components until Hammy has the run of the whole office and can perhaps even be used as an inter-office delivery system.

Unfortunately Hammy, being a nocturnal creature, isn't one for strutting his hamster stuff during office hours. However, we generally find that a stout rapping on his cage is enough to wake him up and perform his cute little hamster yawn/stretch routine for the amusement of his frequent visitors.

It's also come to our attention that Hammy isn't as young as he used to be. He's over a year old now, and since the average life expectancy of a hamster is eighteen months to two years, we must face the grim reality that sooner or later Hammy's ticker is going to give out and begin preparing the arrangements. We'd like to ask you to help us with this by voting on how best to commemorate Hammy after his sad demise, scheduled for sometime later this year.

1) Flush him
2) Bury him under the bushes in the parking lot with full military honors
3) Recreate him as a lovable cartoon hamster to live forever within the pages of *PC Gamer* as Coconut Monkey's new arch-nemesis
4) Have him stuffed, put in a ferocious pose, and mounted above reception
5) Place him in a commemorative presentation box and auction him off on QVC's "Dead Game Magazine Mascots Hour" with proceeds to go to the *Gravy Trader* development budget

Include your name and address and send your choice on a postcard to:
Hammy Funeral Sweepstakes,
PC Gamer, 150 North Hill Drive,
Brisbane, CA 94005

Five entries will be chosen at random and the lucky winners will receive one of the mediocre unwanted games from the *PC Gamer* shelf.

Hardware Requirements

With each *PC Gamer* review, you'll find two very important pieces of information: the game's minimum hardware requirements and the hardware configurations we recommend as the *least* you'll need to really enjoy the game. While a game will run on the minimum system the manufacturer specifies, it might not run all that well. Because of this, we test each game on several systems so we can bring you a more realistic assessment of what you'll *really* need.

THE PC GAMER RATINGS SYSTEM

100%-90% CLASSIC
Not many games can earn a rating over 90%, and even fewer can approach the magic 100. Anything that we rate over 90% is an instant classic — a game that's truly significant in both content and design, and one that we'd recommend without reservation to anyone interested in PC gaming.

89%-80% EXCELLENT
These are excellent games. Anything that scores in this range is well worth your attention, though it may not make any significant advances over its rivals. Also, some genuine benchmark games of decidedly specialist taste will fall into this area — it may be the best 7th Cavalry simulation on the market, but not all of us want to relive Little Bighorn.

79%-70% VERY GOOD
These are pretty good games, which we would recommend to fans of the particular genre — although it's a safe bet that there are probably better games out there.

69%-60% GOOD
A reasonable, above-average game. It may be worth buying, but probably has a few significant flaws that keep it from earning a higher rating.

59%-50% FAIR
Very ordinary games. Not completely worthless, but not a very good way to spend your gaming dollar, either.

49%-40% BELOW AVERAGE
Poor quality. Only a few, slightly redeeming features keep them from falling into the abyss of the next category...

39%-0% DON'T BOTHER
Just terrible games — and the lower you go, the worse they get. Avoid these titles like the Plague — and don't say we didn't warn you!

PC Gamer Editors' Choice Awards

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

Every month, we honor the best games we see — those earning 88% or above — with our Editors' Choice award. It's not easy to earn, and there are a lot of excellent games that fall just short of the honor. So when you see the *PCG* Editors' Choice logo on a game at a local software shop, you can bet it's among the best.



p.113a



p.101



p.127



p.98

SimCity 3000

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

CATEGORY: Strategy **DEVELOPER:** Maxis **PUBLISHER:** Electronic Arts, (800) 245-4525, *www.ea.com* **REQUIRED:** Windows 95/98; Quad-speed CD-ROM drive; Pentium 166; 32MB RAM; 230MB hard-drive space **WE RECOMMEND:** Pentium II 333 or higher **MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS:** None

Maxis' metropolitan classic returns after five long years, and it looks prettier than ever.

Way back in the sepia-toned days of my early editing career, I presided over an issue of the UK edition of *PC Gamer* which devoted its front cover to four simple words in huge, 72-point bold type: THE BEST GAME EVER. The game in question was *SimCity 2000*, and while in retrospect we were probably a little guilty of exaggeration, at the time I could see nothing wrong with that statement.

For weeks on end after our review copy came into the office, I did little else but play *SimCity 2000* — some kind of bizarre mental state overcame me in which I could concentrate on nothing but the welfare of my virtual city and its malcontent residents. Time would fly by like some kind of movie special effect, and after sitting down to play for "just a quick hour," I'd look up from my screen to realize that it was suddenly 3 a.m.

Of course, the SimCity devotees reading this will be nodding their heads in nostalgic agreement — countless thousands of gamers were surprised to find themselves snagged in just the same way. For a game which asks the player to create rather than destroy (always a risky premise in gaming), the popularity of the SimCity series has been staggering. And so it's perhaps not surprising — but nonetheless frustrating to fans of the series — that Maxis has taken its sweet time over this latest version. No less than five (yes, that's five) years have passed since *SimCity 2000* was released, and in that time gamers could be forgiven for worrying that Maxis had lost the plot as the company flooded the market with a steady stream of substandard "Sim-offs" (*SimCopter, SimFarm, SimAnt, SimEarth, SimTower*, and the god-awful *Streets of SimCity* — not to mention some dodgy *SimCity* re-hashes like the CD-ROM and multi-player editions).



***SimCity 3000* lets you zoom in closer than ever before, but the buildings look a little pixelicious at this level, and even the fastest PC will chug.**

Then came the news that the only Sim title gamers really cared about — *SimCity 3000* — was going back to the drawing board, with the vaunted 3D engine being completely scrapped. Gamers had a right to be cynical, since this kind of development U-turn hardly ever bodes well for the finished product. But in the case of *SimCity 3000*, Maxis is to be applauded for scrapping what would probably have been a rash and gimmicky change in direction for the series — such radical approaches to the Sim range have brought nothing but misery to Maxis (and to gamers) in the past, and so sticking with a proven formula for its flagship title was probably the wisest move the company ever made.

And so, what we have with *SimCity 3000* is a game which, both on the surface and underneath, bears more than a passing resemblance to its predecessor. It looks a lot better, of course — if the luscious visuals were part of what drew you into *SimCity 2000*, you'll be in seventh heaven here, with more varied and detailed buildings than ever before. Plus, you'll be able to zoom in even closer — close enough to see individual people and vehicles (the building graphics can get a little blocky at maximum zoom, however). With dozens of real-life monuments — everything from Big Ben to the Empire State Building — added to the mix, *SimCity 3000* reaches a whole new level of visual splendor, but there's a price to pay for all this beauty. Even on a fully loaded 450MHz gaming rig, the screen can be slow to update when



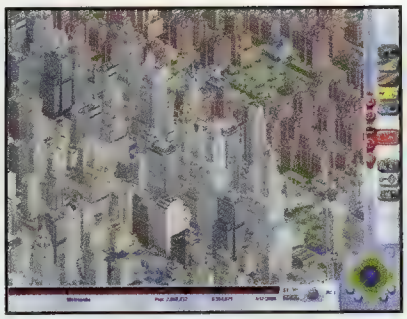
Real-world landmarks like the Eiffel Tower and Big Ben can be used to increase property value and just plain make your city look nicer. That Golden Gate Bridge sure is purty.

scrolling at full detail (generic blocks are shown until the actual buildings can be drawn), making this perhaps the first 2D game to suffer from slow frame rates on such a high-end machine.

For the most part, the gameplay of this new SimCity is just as fans will remember it — acting as a kind of omnipotent city manager, you define residential, industrial, and commercial zones, build roads and amenities, manage the budget and hope that your city is good enough to attract taxpaying citizens. Of course, there's much more to it than that — everything from maintaining an adequate water and power supply to running mass transit, ensuring good fire, police, and school services, and now even managing the city's garbage by creating eyesore landfill zones.

While previous SimCity games provided useful, if impersonal, feedback in the form of charts, graphs and newspaper headlines, *SimCity 3000* has a much more "human" voice. The voluminous statistical data is still there for those who want to wade through it, but the majority of active feedback comes in the form of protests, complaints, and commendations from your city's advisors and activists. Too much crime? Not enough water? You can bet there'll be no shortage of caricatured citizens and officials to tell you all about it. The state of the city is also neatly summarized by a news ticker which consists of headlines scrolling beneath the main game screen; click on one of them, and the appropriate report pops up.

This constant influx of information is in itself easier to understand and manage than in previous SimCity games, but the sheer volume of it can be a little overwhelming at times — and occasionally erratic. In one city I created, I went to great pains to provide better than average water coverage; my graphs told me there was not an inch of the city I'd failed to cover — and yet I still received complaints about inadequate supply! It seems that the SimCitizens have gotten a little grumpier in the past five years, and the result is a tougher challenge than you got from *SimCity 2000*.



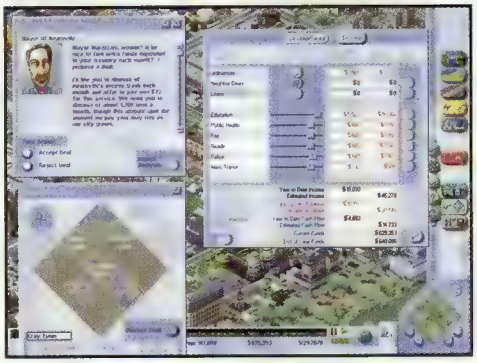
It may look like just another day in the big city, but your people are under attack! There are two UFOs lurking amongst the buildings in this picture — can you spot them?

Also demanding your attention (perhaps too often) will be relationships with neighboring cities. For a small price, you can connect to nearby cities via land or sea, and from then on enter into negotiations to buy or sell services like power, water, and garbage collection. This is a smart way for players to put surplus cash or facilities to good use, although I found the constant offers from the computer-controlled neighboring mayors somewhat annoying — they don't seem to know when to take no for an answer.

And of course, the disasters are back — but I was disappointed to see that they're primarily the same ones we've been seeing in SimCity for years — fire, riots, UFO attack, etc. There are a couple of new ones, but nothing to really fire the imagination or draw "ooh"s and "aah"s the way a disaster effect should. Come on, guys, this is a whole new game, couldn't you come up with anything new? How about a Godzilla-style giant lizard attack, a medical outbreak that needs quarantining, or a good, old-fashioned flood? As it stands, the disasters are still good for the classic *SimCity* "abuse" of smashing up a perfectly good city (after you've saved the game, of course), but I can't help but think that an opportunity was missed to add something fresh and new to the franchise.



One of the many pre-built cities to come with the game, Metropolis is a grand example of what can be achieved by a smart, ambitious player. It's also great for smashing to pieces with relentless disasters.



When mayors from neighboring cities come offering deals, it's wise to check your budgets and consult your financial adviser before saying yea or nay.

There are a few other annoyances, such as long load times and some curious tile-set repetition, which leads to entire commercial zones being populated by multiple instances of the same ice cream store, but these niggles aside, *SimCity 3000* is a satisfying — if somewhat workmanlike — sequel. Does this look like a game five years in the making? No. Will fans of *SimCity* and *SimCity 2000* find themselves inexplicably drawn back into this weird little world? Undoubtedly, yes.

Personally, I couldn't quite escape the feeling while playing that not quite *all* of that indefinable *SimCity* magic has returned in this incarnation, but that's probably because I'm subconsciously ranking the experience against nostalgia-encrusted memories from five years ago. Whether you're new to the concept or a returning die-hard, there's plenty here to keep you playing into the small hours.

—Gary Whitta

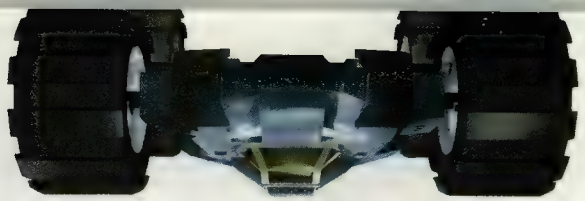
PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

89%

HIGHS: All the novel concepts and depth that have made the *SimCity* games legendary...

LOWS: ...along with some system-guzzling specs and a few mildly irritating new features.

BOTTOM LINE: It's not quite as fresh as it was, but this *SimCity* still delivers fun where it counts.

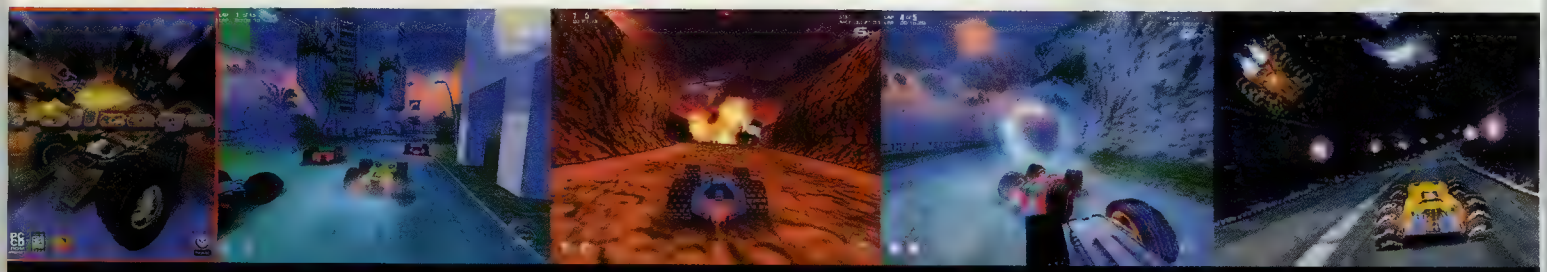


Driving on the ground is so 90s.

rollcage™

Break every law. Including gravity.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #612



PC CD ROM

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Drive any of 6 indestructible vehicles anywhere and everywhere, from the sides of walls to the roofs of tunnels.

Blast away at the scenery with 8 innovative weapons to slow down your opponents.

Race through 20 different tracks spread over 4 distinct environments.

2-player split-screen, head-to-head racing action with 4 specially designed tracks.

Multi-play with up to 4 players via split screen and 6 players via LAN/Internet.

PSYGNOSIS

ATD

www.rollcage-game.com

Myth II: Soulblighter

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

CATEGORY: Strategy **DEVELOPER:** Bungie Software **PUBLISHER:** Bungie Software, (800) 295-0060, *www.bungie.net*
REQUIRED: Windows 95/98; Quad-speed CD-ROM drive; Pentium 133; 32MB RAM **WE RECOMMEND:** Pentium II 233; 64MB RAM; 8x CD-ROM drive **MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS:** TCP/IP; LAN; Internet connection for Bungie.net

Bungie delivers the goods again with a fine sequel to the award-winning *Myth*.

Just as the real-time strategy genre was beginning to suffocate from a near-fatal case of sameness, Bungie released *Myth: The Fallen Lords*. Unlike most of the real-time drivel choking up the shelves, the original *Myth* featured wonderfully gruesome 3D graphics, an original setting and story, and a new spin on resource management — your starting forces are your only resources; lose them, and the party is over. *Myth* was met with nearly universal acclaim and won our Real-Time Strategy Game of the Year award for 1997. With that pedigree in mind, expectations were quite high for the sequel. Bungie meets those expectations with *Myth II: Soulblighter*, which solidifies the Myth series as one of the great real-time strategy franchises, worthy to stand alongside the WarCraft and Command & Conquer games.

Sixty years have passed since the end of the first game's Great War; with the Fallen Lords defeated, life has returned to normal. That all changes one day, when a small village is attacked by the undead. One thing leads to another, and soon the countryside is awash with all manner of nightmarish creatures. It seems a super-baddie named Soulblighter has spent the past 60 years plotting his revenge, and unless you stop him, the world is toast.

Making a sequel to a successful game is always a risky prospect — change too much, and you risk alienating your audience; change too little, and you're accused of kicking the product out the door just to make a quick buck. For the most part, Bungie has successfully navigated this minefield; the core of the game remains the same, and some nice tweaks have been included to make it all a bit more polished.

A common complaint about the first *Myth* was the way in which you controlled your view of the battlefield — you had to use both the mouse and keyboard. This has been streamlined; now you can control the "camera" with the mouse alone. The system is still not perfect, but it's much improved. Various difficulty settings have been incorporated, making the game more accessible to casual gamers. In addition, units have



The tweaked graphics engine of *Myth II* allows for some really cool indoor missions. Get the Baron before he escapes out the door!



Whether it's on the snowy plains or a heaving ship, body parts go flying in combat.

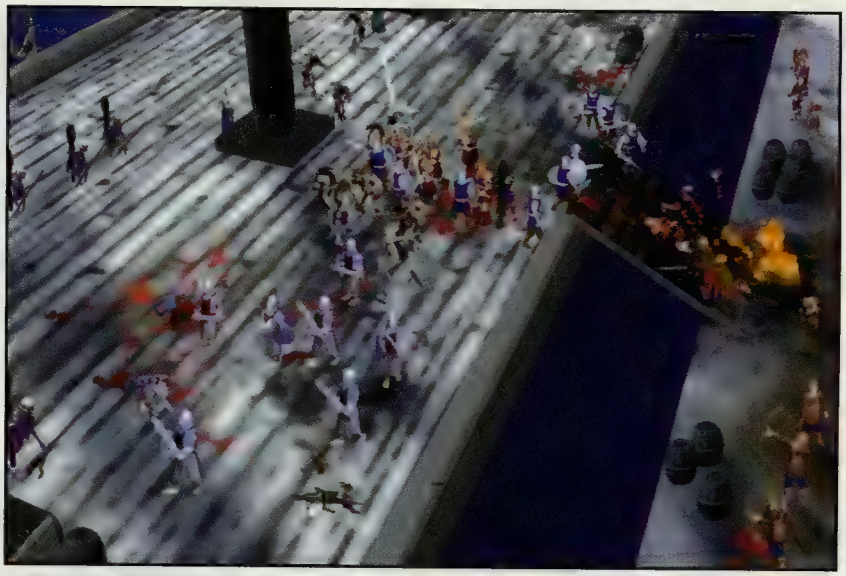


Myth II doesn't skirt the horrors of war. It's bloody and gruesome, just the way we like it.



The inclusion of the game editors Fear and Loathing ensure that people will be blowing each other up in *Myth II* for a good, long while.

twice as many animations, and the terrain features a higher level of detail as well. While cosmetic in nature, these changes do add more detail to the gore factor that was such a hallmark of the original *Myth*. Another welcome addition is the inclusion of large 3D objects. You now storm fortified walls, rush over drawbridges, and battle across ship's decks. There are indoor missions, too, which add a new dimension to gameplay.



There's nothing more fun than washing the deck with the blood of your enemies.

One of the biggest draws of the original *Myth* was its story line. Unlike so many me-too RTS games that set up some lame science fiction backdrop as an excuse to blow the crap out of everything in sight, *Myth* unfolded in a cool and suspenseful manner. The same applies for *Myth II*. The game progresses slowly and deliberately, and the missions work in tandem with the story. Not only does this serve to immerse you in the game, it also allows for some nice variations on traditional RTS missions; the level "With Friends Like These," for example, challenges you to defeat the Trow in a game of capture the flag (if you defeat them, they'll join your cause). Other cool levels include establishing a beachhead while under heavy cannon fire; a general retreat, where your mission is to simply slow the encroaching enemy; and "The Ibis Crown," in which you navigate a haunted catacomb where ghosts, both good and evil, wage war with each other and you. Pretty cool stuff.

Multi-player was one of the most popular aspects of *Myth*, and it shines once again. There are several game types to choose from: Hunting, Stampede!, and the classic Last Man on the Hill. Getting to the carnage on Bungie.net is a snap, and the multi-player code is solid. The editing tools Bungie used to create the levels are included, too, which should extend *Myth II*'s online life the way *StarCraft*'s editor has done for that game.

Myth II is not without flaw; it still carries some of the first game's problems. Pathfinding is still a little weak (especially in multi-player games), and units will sometimes take the long route to a specified location. It's hard to move a unit from the inside of a group to the outside — they'll bump into each other, and neither one will move aside. Friendly fire is still an annoyance (especially from the dwarves), but the archers have been tweaked so they rarely hit friendlies.

While *Myth II* is a great game and comes highly recommended, it does not represent a complete overhaul or rethinking from the first game. Instead, it's a refinement of a proven formula. That's not a bad thing — if it ain't broke, don't fix it. That said, this is probably the last game Bungie will be able to get out of its current game engine. When and if the company decides to start work on *Myth III*, I hope it'll go back and renovate every aspect of the game; I want this quality series to enjoy a long life.

—William Harms

The New Guys

Myth II features a host of new units, both good and evil. Here's a quick run-down.



Heron Guards
Trading their coats and shovels for slim blades and sturdy armor, the renowned Heron Guards return to defend their King and destroy their foes.



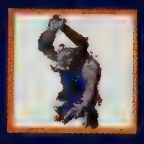
Stygian Knights
Suits of armor animated by dark magic and packing a mean axe, the Stygian Knights are guards par excellence.



Mortar Dwarves
Forever one foot shorter and one step ahead in the arms race, the ever-industrious Sons of Myrgard have upped the ante with potent new weapons.



Undead
Dredged up from still-warm graves to roam the land once more, the plagued touch of the undead brings paralysis followed by a death most foul.



Mauls
Big, brutal, and rumored to have a porcine passion for mud, Mauls have appeared from the Steppes to replace the long-reigning Ghols as the game's ugliest units.



Warlocks
With grim personalities and dubious fashion sense, the dour Warlocks have answered the time-honored question "What do you get when you cross a wight with a cruise missile?"



Brigands
Hired swords, these soldiers of fortune care little for whom they serve and less for whom they slay.



Archers
Armed with keen eyes, keener knives, and often devastating incendiary arrows, the new archer is no longer just another target.

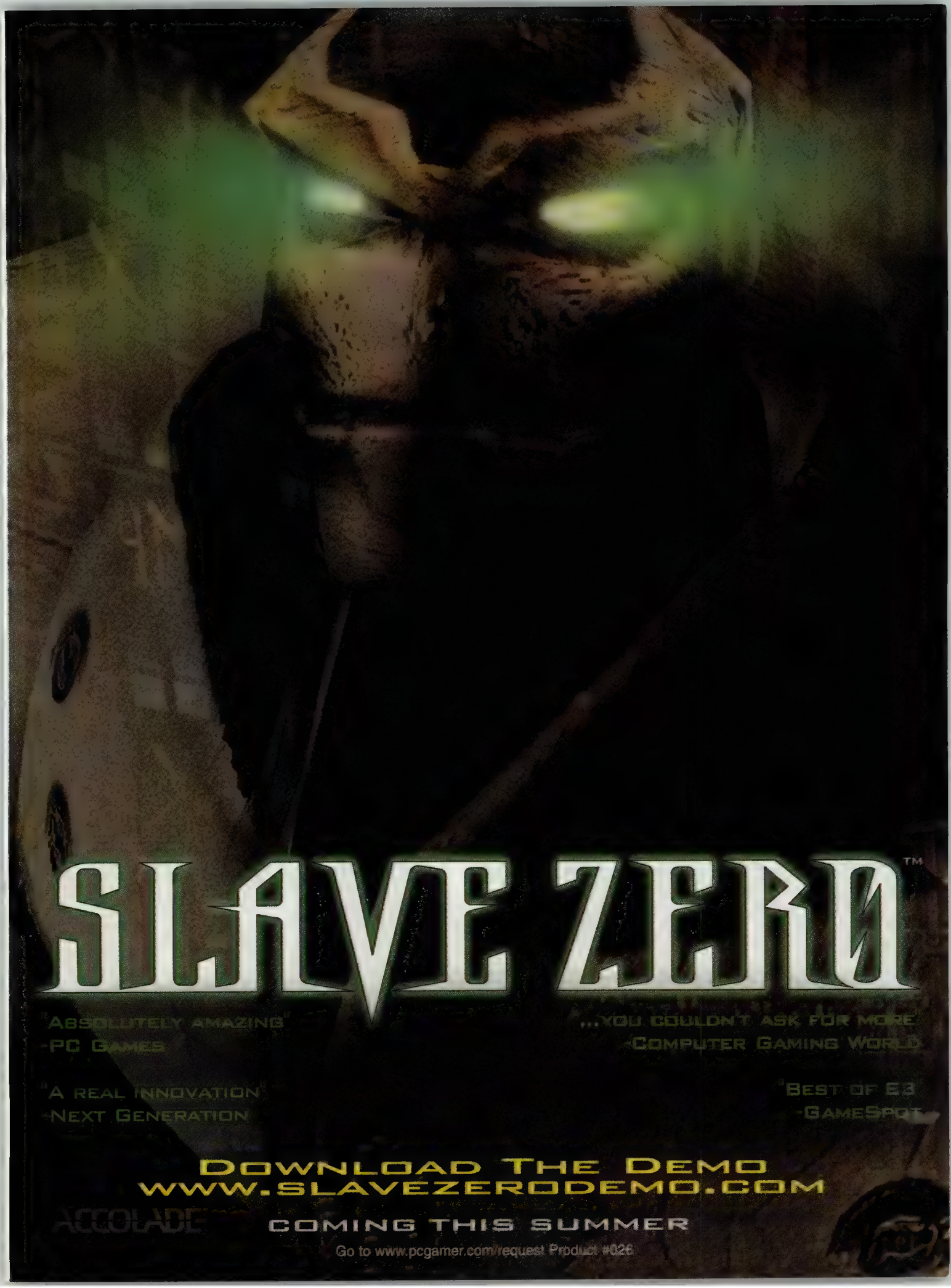
PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Brutal graphics; great multi-player; solid physics model.

88%

LOWS: Weak pathfinding; many changes are cosmetic in nature.

BOTTOM LINE: *Myth II* has wanton carnage, great multi-player action, and killer graphics. What more could you want?



Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #026

DESTROYING YOUR ENEMIES ISN'T ENOUGH...

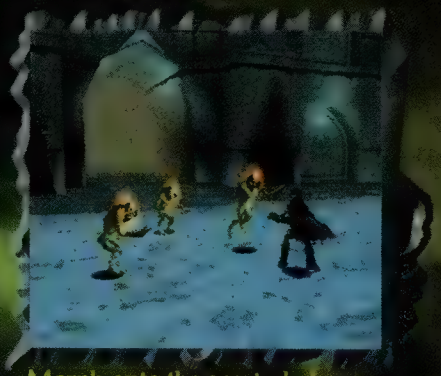


"The elaborate architecture within these 3D environments is some of the best Next Generation has seen on the PlayStation."

–Next Generation

As Raziel, stalk the shadows of Nosgoth hunting your vampire brethren. Impale them with spears. Incinerate them with torches. Drown them in water. No matter how you destroy them, you must feed on their souls to sustain your quest – the ruin of your creator, Kain.



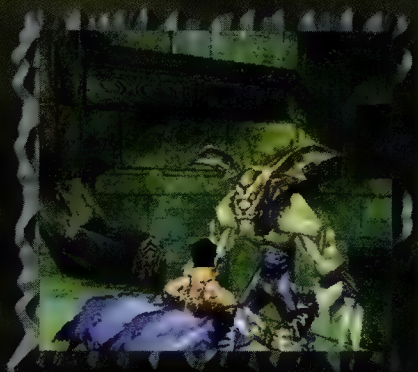


Morph onto the spectral plane and confront unique enemies and gameplay challenges

- Shift real-time between the material and spectral planes
- Dark gothic story

"...the completely revamped sequel to Legacy of Kain promises high immersion factor."

–Spin

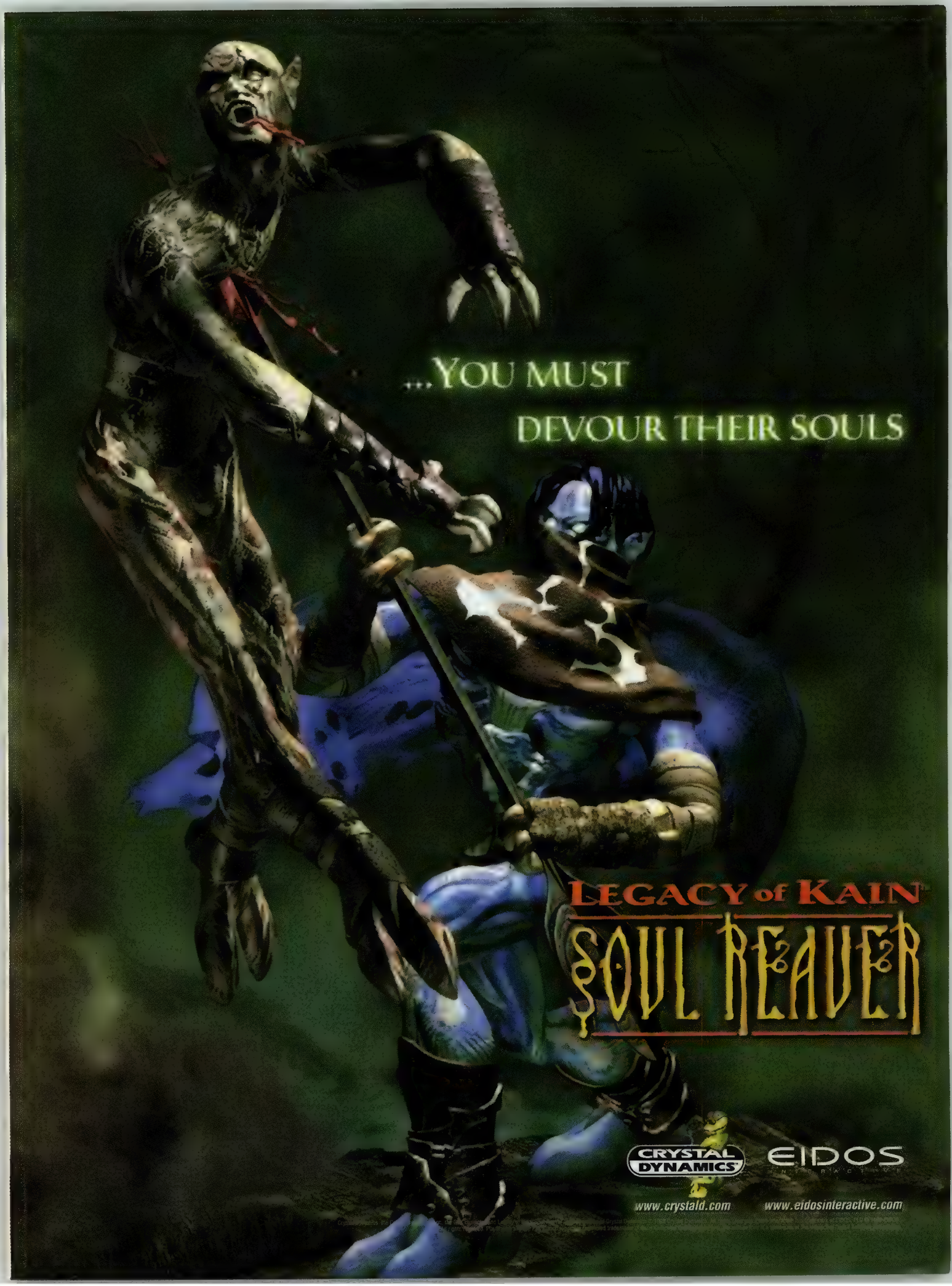


PlayStation

TEEN T ESRB

PC CD ROM

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #196


...YOU MUST
DEVOUR THEIR SOULS
LEGACY of KAIN
SOUL REAVER
CRYSTAL DYNAMICS
EIDOS
www.crystald.com
www.eidosinteractive.com



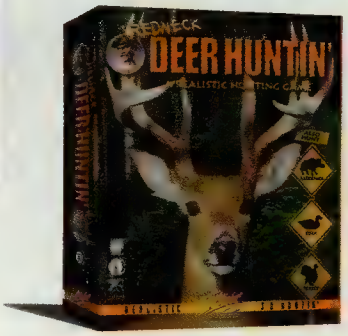
Baldur's Gate™
1998 RPG of the Year
Computer Gaming World



Carmageddon™ 2



Fallout™ 2



Redneck Deer Huntin'™

Look For:

Baldur's Gate
Tales of the Sword Coast
Expansion Pack

COLLECT.

(UPC's from the boxes)

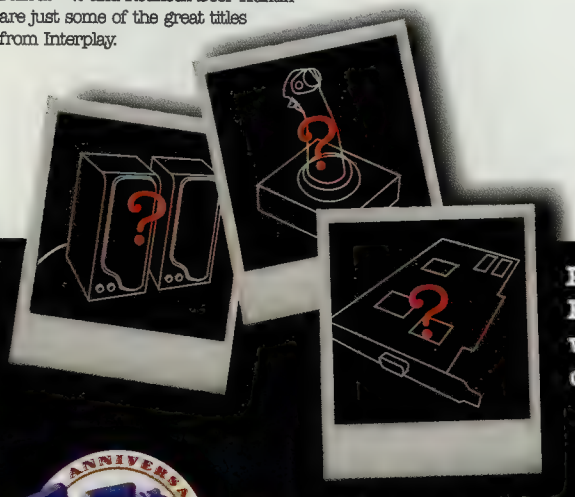
1 800 222 8554

REDEEM.

(Great Prizes)

IT'S THAT SIMPLE.

Baldur's Gate™, Carmageddon™ 2, Fallout™ 2 and Redneck Deer Huntin'™ are just some of the great titles from Interplay.



DIAMOND MULTIMEDIA

Labtec. THE COMPUTER AUDIO EXPERTS™

Purchase Interplay titles between March 1, 1999 and February 29, 2000, cut out and send in the UPC's, and we'll reward you with free hardware, accessories and other cool stuff.

15th ANNIVERSARY Interplay BY GAMERS. FOR GAMERS.

For more details, game card, and a set of official rules see specially marked Interplay packages, visit us at www.interplay.com/mostwanted or call 1-888-222-8554.

©1999 Interplay Productions. Interplay, the Interplay logo and "By Gamers. For Gamers." are trademarks of Interplay Productions. All Rights Reserved. All other copyrights and trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

CAPTURE COLLECT Interplay 1 800 222 8554 REDEEM

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #331

Turok 2: Seeds of Evil

CATEGORY: Action **DEVELOPER:** Iguana **PUBLISHER:** Acclaim, (516) 656-5000, *www.acclaim.net* **REQUIRED:** Windows 95/98; Quad-speed CD-ROM drive; Pentium 200; 32MB RAM; 200MB hard-drive space; DirectX-compatible sound card; 3D accelerator (Direct3D or 3Dfx) **WE RECOMMEND:** Pentium II 233; 3Dfx Voodoo2-based 3D accelerator. **MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS:** TCP/IP; IPX

The mighty Turok is back, saving the world from alien dinosaur half-breeds.

Imagine the game *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* with more weapons, more intriguing enemies, multi-player support, slightly better graphics, an in-level save feature, and a few other new goodies. It seems like that list of updates should make *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil* a far superior game to the original, but somehow the two games *feel* exactly the same.

The original *Turok* turned heads with its amazing 3D enemies, not to mention the coolest set of weapons in a first-person shooter since *Duke Nukem 3D*. Unfortunately, a bad case of console-itis prevented the game from stacking up to its contemporaries, like *Quake II*. *Turok 2* builds upon the original in many ways, but most of the failings of its predecessor are still present and accounted for.

The single-player game pits Turok against countless alien-dinosaur hybrids in a quest to stop an invasion. The enemies are modeled beautifully, and new to this installment is a nifty damage model: enemies take a bigger beating when you hit them in the head or chest. In fact, you can kill most of the opponents you'll encounter with a single arrow, provided you hit them squarely in the head.

The gore level also has been greatly increased. Enemy death throes last longer than before, and they're much more graphic: if you shoot a raptor in the head with a shotgun, for example, its head is blown clean off and its body runs around for a moment before collapsing, twitching, and gushing blood out of the neck hole. If you like that sort of thing, there's a lot here to like.

Although this game is supposedly built on a new graphics engine, it strongly resembles the original. The game world has the shiny, glossy look that made the first game distinctive, and it also sports the maddening close-in fog that made you feel like Turok could barely see his hand in front of his face. The viewing distance is way too short.

The addition of a save-anywhere feature, absent in the original, shows that the developers didn't simply port this game intact from the console systems it was originally designed for. That's a good thing, and being able to save the game anywhere in a level greatly reduces frustration — but there's a problem. Some enemies you killed before you saved the game are resurrected when your reload; if you don't pay attention to their original locations, you might find yourself with your back to a dino you thought was dead.

The levels in this game are *huge*. Even with an available map overlay, it's easy to get lost and end up backtracking. Each level gives you a set of specific goals to accomplish before you can leave, and you'll also have to be on the lookout for "keys" to later levels; the levels are connected by a hub, and passageways to each level must be unlocked with three keys each before you can proceed. It's vexing to complete a level and be teleported to the hub, only to discover that you don't have enough keys to move on.

The biggest problem, though, is the muddy feel of the game's controls. *Quake*-style mouse control is now possible, but it doesn't feel responsive no matter how high you set the sensitivity of the mouse. As you move through the game world, you bob and weave almost constantly, which actually induced nausea more than once in this stout-hearted reviewer.

Turok 2 features multi-player capability, but it seems like more of a tacked-on afterthought than a planned design; with the huge number of weapons available, game balance is terrible. In deathmatch games (called Rok Match), the guy who gets to the biggest weapon first is inevitably going to rack up the most frags.

If you loved the original *Turok*, you might enjoy *Seeds of Evil* — but if you're looking for a really good first-person shooter experience, keep shopping.

—Joel Durham Jr.



One of the more interesting graphic effects is that the arrows you hit a baddie with remain visible. You can even get them back to reuse after he dies.



Gore galore! After blowing an enemy's head off, you can stick around and watch the blood gush out of the hole. If you like that sort of thing.

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

64%

HIGHS: Excellent enemy models; area-specific damage model; lots of cool weapons.

LOWS: Short draw distance and horrible fog; sludgy controls; poor multi-player balance.

BOTTOM LINE: Only console gamers and die-hard *Turok* fans will like this game.

Top Gun: Hornet's Nest

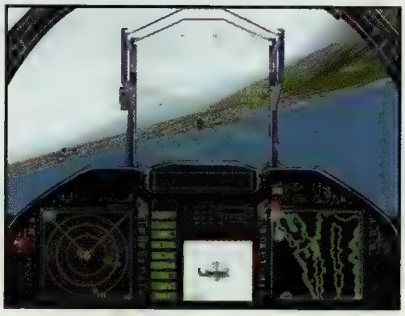
CATEGORY: Action **DEVELOPER:** Zipper Interactive **PUBLISHER:** MicroProse, (800) 656-5443, *www.microprose.com* **REQUIRED:** Windows 95/98; Double-speed CD-ROM drive; Pentium 166; 32MB RAM; 250MB hard-drive space; Mouse **WE RECOMMEND:** Pentium 300; 64MB RAM; Joystick and throttle
MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS: LAN: 2-8 players; TCP/IP: 2-8 players; Internet: 2-8 players

Even the air combat novices this game is aimed at will be hard put to find anything redeeming about it.

It's a testament to MicroProse that, in just a handful of months, the company was able to bring out a series of excellent and far-ranging air combat sims: *Falcon 4.0, European Air War,* and *Top Gun: Hornet's Nest.*

Well, two out of three ain't bad.

Frankly, it's pretty amazing that *Falcon 4.0* and *EAW,* after floating in the twilight zone of development hell for years, are not only on the shelves but are quite exceptional — so maybe we should cut MicroProse some slack with *Hornet's Nest.* After all, it's aimed at a very different market than the other two. Masochists, for instance.



So is this an X-Wing or and F/A-18? It's hard to tell, but at least it's colorful.

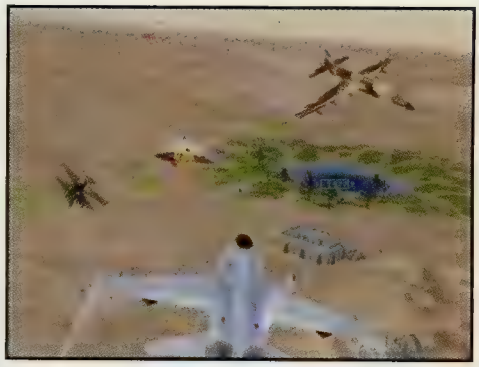
This is the second time to the well for MicroProse and its *Top Gun* movie license, and the company seems desperate to recoup whatever money it paid to make games based on this 13-year-old flick. We all got a good laugh over the corny video, ugly terrain graphics, and generally dumbed-down gameplay of *Top Gun: Fire at Will,* but compared to *Hornet's Nest* it was freakin' *Alpha Centauri.* At least it had some semblance of play balance and logic, and its production values were positively Cameronesque compared to the few minutes of grainy video in the present offering. And, to be fair, dumb people have a right to flight sims, too. So I went into *Hornet's Nest* anticipating a pure arcade-style sim that would satisfy people who want the pleasure of a sim without the fuss.

But *Hornet's Nest* is so aggressively stupid and unbalanced that it boggles the mind. It also has almost zilch to do with the *Top Gun* movie, save the fact that you are named Maverick and James Tolkan (the bald guy from the movie) is around for a few seconds to bark at you. You're no longer in a two-seater F-14 Tomcat, but a single-seater F/A 18 Hornet. Well, it's sort of a Hornet — or it's what a Hornet would be if it were made out of lead and armed by George Lucas. Right from the first minute in the air, you sense that this is going to be neither a realistic flight sim nor an entertaining arcade game because of the way the plane handles. If it were a true sim, it would handle like the real Hornet: fairly quick and agile. If it were an arcade game, it would handle like a teenager's idea of a Hornet: super-fast and ultra-agile, able to turn on a dime and never bleed speed no matter the angle of attack. Instead, it handles like a pig stuck in the mud. It feels slow and cumbersome, and has the turn radius of a passenger plane. It lacks the exact thing it needs to be an acceptable action game — fast, responsive control.



The terrain engine looks and performs quite decently, marking the only area in which *Top Gun: Hornet's Nest* is superior to the mediocre *Top Gun: Fire at Will.*

Missions are so beyond weird as to defy categorization. They tie to an odd-ball "mad-man conquers the world" plot line that even the people who made the *Top Gun* movie would find silly, complete with sci-fi super-weapons, but they're maddeningly designed and feel utterly untested. On many of the missions I flew, there were so many threats — and my wingmen were so completely useless — that it was impossible to complete the mission without setting ammo to "unlimited." Adding to the confusion are bizarro weapons designed to inflict damage on entire flight groups with a single well-placed hit, as if the Navy had gotten its hands on *Quake II*'s BFG. This peculiar mix of the absurd and the incompetent yanks it out of either target categories, arcade or hardcore, and into some nether region occupied by the likes of *SimCopter.*



Mavericks have trouble locking onto ground targets, so you'll probably have to use your cannon to destroy them. Good thing it's impossibly powerful.

The truly weird part is that, with a little better flight programming and some missions that were actually tested, this game had some faint glimmer of potential. The graphics engine is quite decent, and the missions, even with their comic-book trappings, could've been fun. But what we have here is a game that needs to be fast and fun, but is instead slow and unbalanced. There's certainly a market for action-oriented sims, and the *Top Gun* license provides ample opportunity for some straightforward, uncomplicated air combat action. Instead, we get Maverick-meets-*Airwolf*-on-Xanax, and that's bound to disappoint everybody.

—T. Liam McDonald

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

25%

HIGHS: Terrain graphics aren't bad; James Tolkan is cool.

LOWS: Extremely sluggish handling; wingmen and enemy pilots are brain-dead.

BOTTOM LINE: The faintest glimmer of fun may lurk somewhere in this morass, but even the most diligent and forgiving gamer won't find it.



ATTENTION ALL INTERNET USERS:

Start talkin'

Talk n' Play is the best way to speak with up to four people over the internet. Combine that with 25 Internet games from World Opponent Network and a sweet headset and you've got internet gaming, baby!

So now you can connect with your family and friends and challenge them to a game of Poker, Golf or Red Baron, even if they live thousands of miles away!

Start Playing!



25 INTERNET GAMES • 4 PERSON INTERNET PHONE • HEADSET / MICROPHONE

www.talknplay.com

COMPUSA

THRUSTMASTER is a registered trademark of ThrustMaster, Inc. Talk n' Play is a trademark of ThrustMaster, Inc. WeCanTalk.com is a trademark of ThrustMaster, Inc. All other trademarks and registered trademarks are the properties of their respective owners.

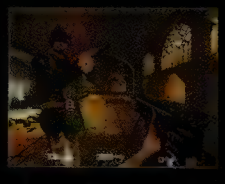
Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #781

MORTYR

THIS IS YOUR FUTURE...

UNLESS YOU CHANGE THE PAST!

"Wolfenstein 3D with all the latest advances in game play and graphics."
-PC GAMER







REQUIRES 3D HARDWARE
PC CD-ROM

INTERACTIVE MAGIC

www.mortyr.com

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #359

Newman/Haas Racing

CATEGORY: Racing **DEVELOPER:** Bizarre Creations **PUBLISHER:** Psygnosis, (800) GET-PSYG, *www.psygnosis.com* **REQUIRED:** Windows 95/98; Double-speed CD-ROM drive; Pentium 133; 16MB RAM; 100MB hard-drive space; Mouse; 3D accelerator (Direct3D, 3Dfx, or PowerVR) **WE RECOMMEND:** Pentium 200; 32MB RAM; Racing wheel and pedals **MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS:** LAN: 2-8 players; TCP/IP: 2-8 players; Internet: 2-8 players; Modem: 2 players

With all the terrific racing games on the market, people who buy this one deserve what they get.

My Windows wallpaper is a picture of the late, great bluegrass icon Bill Monroe. I tell you this not as an example of my musical tastes, but because it is my predominant memory of the time I spent with *Newman/Haas Racing*. In the course of several sessions, I saw Mr. Monroe more than I saw the track. It seems anything I did — shifting, braking, bumping the wall, breathing, digesting lunch — caused the game to crash to the desktop. Since I like my Bill Monroe wallpaper, these were, in retrospect, the finest moments of the game; the true pain was actually playing this sucker.

Newman/Haas is an appallingly botched PC port of a PlayStation game that was none too swift to begin with. Every single bloody thing in this game is wrong.

Let's start with the interface, which is where videogame-to-PC translations usually go horribly awry: Sometimes you can use your mouse for menu selections, sometimes you can't and must use your keyboard. Sometimes neither works, and you must use your game controller. Sometimes you have to bang the screen and scream, because nothing works — the game has locked up. The elements governing which input device is active in a given menu are mysterious; perhaps they have something to do with the phases of the moon.

Not that there are many options to choose from. This is definitely not a game for the hardcore racer. It's not even a game for the soft-core racer. The garage options are incredibly simplistic, with only generic settings. Getting to the garage setup menu from inside a race is a marvel of menu jumping, involving all three control devices and about 12 screens. The notion that "serious racing enthusiasts as well as beginners will find *Newman/Haas Racing* intense, intuitive, and challenging" borders on false advertising.

Even on the hardest settings, this is a patently unrealistic game. Oh, the cars handle okay, but at nowhere near the level of a true sim for hardcore racers. The real problem is with damage modeling and your opponents. You can do a number of monumentally stupid and dangerous things and drive on, seemingly unscathed. You could play this thing not as a race but as a demolition derby, bumping cars off the road instead of beating them at the racing. Why do I know this? After an hour with this drab and buggy game, I tried doing just that. Anything to make it more interesting.



The graphics aren't bad; except for the pop in, and the lack of visible damage, and those angular tires, and...

The hardware-accelerated graphics are generally pretty good. Chassis have a fair amount of detail, and tracks are visually quite nice. But even this element has real problems: the tires, for instance, are weirdly misshapen and angular, as though you're driving on giant rubber lug-nuts. There's also a ghastly amount of terrain pop-in on distant objects. In racing games, I find this really distracting; it's almost impossible not to watch the buildings appear on the horizon. I'd rather just turn distant objects off. As for sound effects, you'll get better from a Game Boy. Engines, impacts, and voices sound as though they were recorded on a Little Tykes My First Cassette Player at the receiving end of a tin-can-and-string rig. There's also an endless loop of that swell techno music that game publishers must buy by the yard from former members of Kraftwerk.

The real mystery is that this game is based on the same engine as *Formula 1*, a game I liked. I'd love to know how it wound up this way; it's a buggy game with a horrid interface and screwy track action — other than those minor points, it's just fine.

—T. Liam McDonald



Want to win the race? Just run into the other drivers; they'll crash or be crippled, and you can drive on to victory! This is not a racer for the hardcore gamer.

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

22%

HIGHS: It looks nice; replay mode.

LOWS: Bugs and more bugs; crashes constantly; baroque interface; unrealistic driving models, damage modes.

BOTTOM LINE: There's no reason to own this game with so many good better driving games from Ubi Soft, EA, Microsoft, and Sierra.

Thunder Brigade

CATEGORY: Action **DEVELOPER:** Bluemoon Interactive **PUBLISHER:** Interactive Magic, (800) 789-1534, *www.imagicgames.com* **REQUIRED:** Windows 95/98; Double-speed CD-ROM drive; Pentium 100; 32MB RAM **WE RECOMMEND:** Pentium II 333; Supported sound card **MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS:** 16 players via LAN; 4 players via TCP/IP

Remember *Terminal Velocity?* Here it is again, four years later... except with gravity. And less impressive graphics.

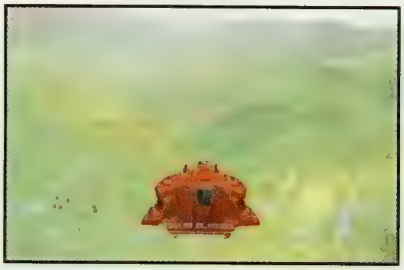
The computer game industry is one that innovates, its creators building on each other's ideas and gameplay concepts to create sequels and genre-busters that dazzle and delight...about ten percent of the time. The other 90 percent of the time is spent cranking out cruddy knockoffs of lackluster games to be tossed into a saturated market to make a quick buck.

Thunder Brigade bears all the marks of belonging to that latter 90 percent. It's a ground-bound clone of the popular fly-around-and-shoot-stuff action games that made their mark a few years back, like *Terminal Velocity*, *Scorched Planet*, and *Hellbender*. And, unsurprisingly, it offers essentially no innovation to set itself apart from the rest.

The plot could be from any of a whole bargain-bin full of games; we humans have finally discovered a peaceful planet to colonize, but there's some sort of civil war that erupts because somebody accidentally left the president's toilet seat up, and chaos reigns supreme. It's your duty to hop into your gravity-defying hovertank thingy and shoot anything that shows up as a red blip on your radar scope.



Another enemy bites the dust. When these Halon towers come into range, activate your missile weapon and let 'em have it.



When you hit the alternate view key, the camera pans back to show you how silly your hovertank really looks.

The control is best described as *Descent* with gravity; you can pitch your view up and down, but you're always stuck to the ground as you cruise over the game's numerous mountainous regions. In this way, it's more like a *Doom* or *Quake* game — you can do the whole circle-strafe thing around your opponents while peppering them with rail-gun fire. *Thunder Brigade*'s gameplay consists of shooting blocky enemies, then finding stationary targets and blowing them up with missiles. Repeat until bored.

The sole strength of *Thunder Brigade* is its wide variety of options and missions. There's a solid campaign mode that takes you through a series of near-identical missions, and there's an Instant Action mode that throws you into the midst of a random firefight. Still, none of this can redeem the fact that *Thunder Brigade* is almost entirely devoid of personality or innovation. Just one example of *Thunder Brigade's* undeniable blahness is its computer-controlled wingmen — you can't issue individual commands over an intercom, and there's no radio chatter whatsoever.

The marketing copy on the box is quick to point out that *Thunder Brigade's* voxel-based graphics don't require a 3D card — that's another way of saying the game doesn't support 3D acceleration. The game's visuals are a mixed bag. Running in standard VGA mode, *Thunder Brigade* is a hideous mess of dithered pixels; in 16-bit high-color mode, the landscapes avoid the freakishly lumpy look of the voxel hills and valleys in *Comanche 3* (assuming you've got the PII 333 needed to run smoothly in this mode), but they still appear a bit unnatural. This is partially the fault of *way* overused colored lighting — some of the battlefields look like they've been the victims of Lucky the Leprechaun's magical rainbow paintbrush. Designers, please: restrain yourselves...

Thunder Brigade features a fairly in-depth network mode. Unfortunately, you probably won't be able to find anyone to play with you. If you feel so inclined, you can log onto I-Magic's matchmatching service and see if anyone wants to go a round or two over the Internet. Chances are, they'll be too busy playing *Warbirds* instead.

All in all, *Thunder Brigade* offers very little in the way of innovative gameplay, and a whole slew of other games have handled this kind of action much better. If the people at I-Magic are honestly aiming to release only triple-A titles rather than cranking out boxes of mediocrity to please stockholders, they should sit back and take a good, hard look at the competition before releasing the likes of *Thunder Brigade*.

—Colin Williamson



Good lord! What is up with that hideously colorful landscape? All those shades of pink and blue could give you a hankerin' for some Froot Loops....

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

40%

HIGHS: Lotsa missions, colorful voxel landscapes.

LOWS: Unless you've got a fast Pentium II, graphics are ugly; stuck-to-the-ground physics and repetition hamper the experience.

BOTTOM LINE: *Thunder Brigade* offers little to hold your interest for long.

DEMONSTRATION #2:

1. Tear out your old sound card.
2. Smash into pieces.
3. Toss over your shoulder.

The sound those pieces make when they hit the ground all *around* you is the power of A3D from Aureal, the only audio that works the way your ears do.

That's why leading sound card vendors, such as Diamond, TerraTec, Turtle Beach, and Xitel, are using Vortex audio technology from Aureal, the only 3D audio accelerator that supports industry leading A3D positional audio technology.

You can also find A3D positional audio on computer models from the industry's leading PC manufacturers.

Audio based on Aureal technology is awesome. But don't take our word for it. Believe Your Ears. Check out A3D at your local retailer.



BELIEVE YOUR EARS™

Visit us at www.A3D.com

©1998 Aureal Semiconductor, Inc. A3D and Aureal are trademarks of Aureal Semiconductor Inc. Other trademarks are properties of their respective owners.

Go to http://pcgamer.ign.com/request Product #029

Dark Side of the Moon

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

CATEGORY: Adventure **DEVELOPER:** SouthPeak Interactive **PUBLISHER:** SouthPeak Interactive, (919) 677-4499, *www.southpeak.com*
REQUIRED: Windows 95/98; 8x CD-ROM drive; Pentium 166; 32MB RAM; 150MB hard-drive space **WE RECOMMEND:** Pentium 200; 16x CD-ROM drive
MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS: none

SouthPeak quietly presents one of the best adventure games to come down the pike in many moons.

I'm not sure how they do it, but SouthPeak's "video reality" technology lets you move 360 degrees through a fully interactive environment comprising some of the silkiest full-motion video images you've ever seen. The result is movie-quality imagery wedded to moody, atmospheric backgrounds.

But great video technology has never been enough to make a great game. Most of the credit for this game's excellence goes to veteran screenwriter Lee Sheldon (whose last work was the ambitious *Riddle of Master Lu* from Sanctuary Woods, released just before that gutsy little company went belly-up).

In the realm of adventure games, the writer is usually the odd man out, because most adventure scripts are strung together from cliches that form, at best, a skeleton frame whose main purpose is to support the latest gee-whiz graphics. The usual result is cardboard characters who can be shuffled from game to game without anyone knowing — or caring.

If you want to see what an extraordinary difference a really good writer can make, just embark on the adventure in *Dark Side of the Moon*. Sheldon's a 20-year veteran of TV, having scripted programs as diverse as *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Charlie's Angels*. Lee's a two-time nominee for the Edgar award for his mystery scripts, and he's been a Writers' Guild nominee as well.

Several years ago, Lee got fed up with the Hollywood rat race and decided to apply his talents to computer gaming, a medium he feels is every bit as challenging and rewarding as TV or film. He relocated to North Carolina, where SouthPeak has two 5,000-square-foot sound stages as lavishly equipped as anything you'd find in Hollywood.

The result is that, not too far into *Dark Side's* complex story, you'll realize that something rather magical is happening: you feel actual emotions for the characters, whether you're attracted to them or fear them. The story is utterly non-linear; there are hundreds of paths you can take: no "missions," no "levels," no "side quests."

Dark Side is distinguished by a rich narrative. Even the puzzles, some of them quite fiendish, are fully integrated into the story, not just thrown in as padding to give the player something to do.

The farther you go into *Dark Side*, the more spellbinding it becomes. You play Jake Wright, an adventuresome but nearly penniless young man who's just inherited a mining claim from his uncle, a dream-chaser who was on the verge of "The Big Strike" but who died mysteriously just as he found what he was looking for. You've inherited the claim, but is it as fabulous as some characters profess or just another dream that didn't pan out?

You have a touch of Uncle Jacob's wanderlust, so you embark for the mining column on Luna Crysta, sixth moon of the planet Cepheus, to find out the truth about Jacob's death and to learn whether you've inherited a fortune or just some worthless documents.



Good old Uncle Jake died and left you with a mystery to solve — and a whole bunch of serious trouble.

Luna Crysta is beautifully conceived and rendered, a gritty, end-of-the-line outpost run by the all-powerful Brave Hope Mining Corp. Down in the great abyss of the central mining shaft, prospectors grub for mineral riches. But most of the hard work is done by the native population, the Cepheids, who seem docile and willing, literally, to work themselves to death for their human masters.

The plot thickens when Jake learns that oxygen has a narcotic effect on the natives. Their apparent docility is caused by a massive oxygen-pumping system which keeps them drugged and bereft of free will. Early in the game, Jake realizes there's even more going on behind the scenes; he's being tailed by an affable, moon-faced, but faintly sinister guy named Whistler. Eventually, someone murders Whistler and Jake gets the blame. Now he's a fugitive from Brave Hope's ruthless security force, headed by the iron-jawed Einar Grice.

The game not only features an outstanding script (and generally solid acting that brings it to life), but movie-quality environments. A gripping story, fully realized characters, spectacular environments, even a seasoning of whimsy — all of these combine to create a unique gaming experience. In short, *Dark Side* is one of the best adventure games I've played in a long time.

— William R. Trotter



This evil-looking fellow is Einar Grice, the head of the Brave Hope Mining Corp.'s security force. He's destined to make your character's life hell.

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Great script, solid acting, marvelous graphics; you'll become emotionally involved.

90%

LOWS: Lots of disc-swapping; some tough puzzles.

BOTTOM LINE: SouthPeak is coming on strong — this is one of the better adventure games in recent memory.

YOUR PEOPLE have been trapped on a hostile world for 1,300 years.

YOUR PAST is a single ancient ruin and a blackened stone that points the way to the center of the galaxy.

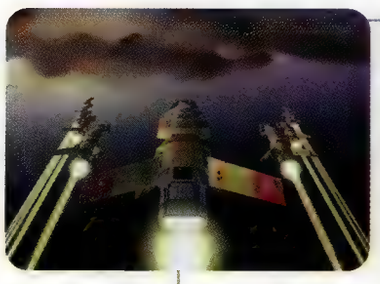
YOUR PRESENT is a quest for answers and a five mile long starship that took 60 years to build.

THE FUTURE. . . is in jeopardy.

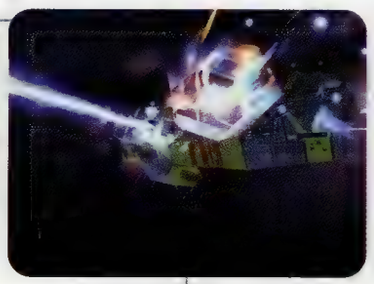
HOMEWORLD®



Game of the Show E3 1998 -CGW / Winner of UGO's Best Real-Time Stra



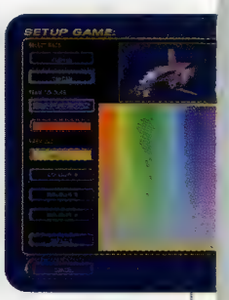
Choose unit types, fleet formations and flight tactics to create the best combat group for each tactical situation.



An advanced research tree lets you construct 54 ships between two distinct races, from lightly armored fighter class interceptors to gigantic carriers that can build and transport up to 250 ships into battle.



Detailed weapon systems - including mass drivers, guided missiles, ion cannons and mines - operate automatically to track multiple or single targets.



Customize you from fuel co and fleet mission objec even the col for your A

Find detailed gameplay and ship specifications at www.sierrastudios.com

©1999 Sierra On-Line Inc., All rights reserved. Sierra, Sierra Studios and the Sierra logo are trademarks and Homeworld is a registered trademark of Sierra On-Line Inc. Relic Entertainment is a trademark of Relic Ente

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #095

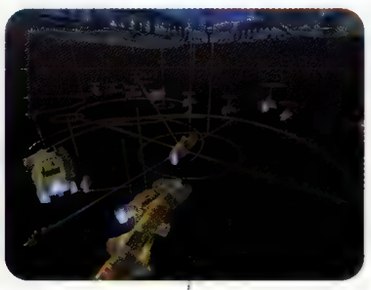
LOCATION: The Great Wasteland.

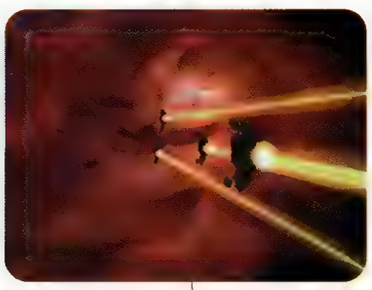
DESTINATION: Galactic Core.

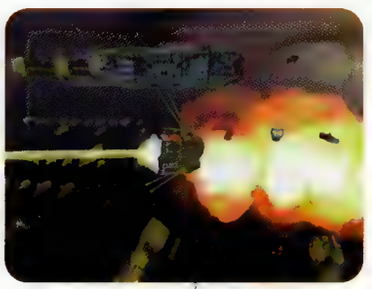


tegy Game of E3









ır game -
nsumption
ize to
tives and
r scheme
rmada.

Command the smallest scout ship or your entire armada in an unrestricted 3D world for pinpoint control.

Explore super detailed galactic regions, from asteroid fields to nebulae to dust clouds.

Lead your Armada through 16 single-player missions, or play against seven opponents over the Internet or LAN in multiplayer scenarios. A robust mission editor lets you create your own maps for online campaigns.

SIERRA™ STUDIOS

relic™ ENTERTAINMENT

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

rtainment Inc.



©1999 The Learning Company, Inc. and its subsidiaries. Artwork and imagery ©1999 Games Workshop Ltd. All rights reserved. The SSI logo and Panzer General are registered trademarks and Rites of War is a trademark of Learning Company Properties Inc. Warhammer, Games Workshop, Space Marines, Eldar and Tyranids are registered trademarks of Games Workshop Ltd. All other trademarks are the property of their respective holders.

WARHAMMER 40,000

RITES OF WAR™

LEAD THE POWERFUL ELDAR® WARRIORS IN A DESPERATE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL.

In a galaxy dominated by the uncaring Empire of Man, the mystic Eldar™ must battle the evil, bio-engineered Tyranids™!

RITES OF WAR™ thrusts you into the electrifying WARHAMMER® 40,000 Universe! Based on the award-winning Panzer General® II game system, this turn-based strategy game is easy to play, but filled with deep strategies that are a challenge to master. Substantially upgraded from its famous predecessor, units are twice as large and animate when they move, attack and die.

70 diverse 3-D rendered, animated units from the WARHAMMER® 40,000 universe. Cooperative and head-to-head multiplayer support will hone your survival skills.



A 24-mission campaign features a tightly crafted storyline, detailed atmosphere and varied victory conditions. Additional single and multiplayer scenarios let you command Tyranid and Imperial armies.



Glory point system lets you build and customize your own armies, with your choice of unit types, wargear and warrior skills.



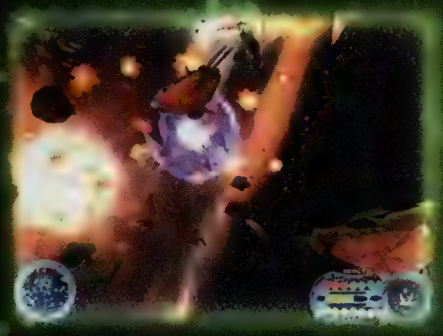
SSI

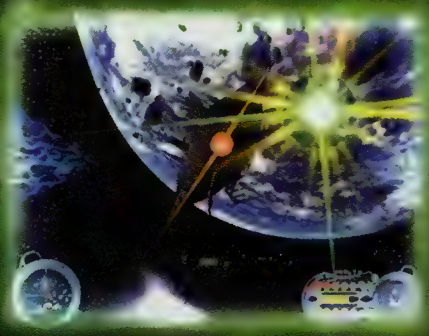
TO ORDER: Visit your retailer or call: **1-800-716-8503** with Visa/MC (North America only).

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #745

"IN 1982, HE TERRIFIED A GENERATION OF ARCADE PLAYERS AND BECAME A CULT FIGURE."









THQ

www.thq.com

GameFX

www.gamefx.com

RATING PENDING
RP
For www.esrb.org or call 800-771-3772 for more info
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

SUMMER '99

Sinistar © 1982 Midway Games Inc. Sinistar and Midway are registered trademarks of Midway Games Inc. and used under license by THQ Inc. All rights reserved. GameFX and THQ Inc. are trademarks of THQ Inc. Software to this game © 1999 THQ Inc. All rights reserved.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #783


SIDESTAR
UNLEASHED
HE'S BACK.
RUN, COWARD, RUN.

Uprising 2: Lead and Destroy

CATEGORY: Action-Strategy **DEVELOPER:** Cyclone Studios **PUBLISHER:** 3DO, (800) 336-3506, *www.3do.com* **REQUIRED:** Windows 95/98; Quad-speed CD-ROM drive; Pentium 166; 32MB RAM; 300MB hard-drive space; DirectX-compatible video and sound cards **WE RECOMMEND:** Pentium II 233; 64MB RAM; 3D accelerator (3Dfx) **MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS:** IPX, TCP/IP, serial and modem; Max Players: 8; Play free on HEAT or Mplayer

Better graphics and a more intuitive interface aren't quite enough to save this sequel from unfavorable comparisons to *Battlezone*.

Nothing could be more intimidating for a design house than to have to write the follow-up to a monumental game. Few, in fact, have done it successfully. id's efforts with the Doom and Quake games are continually impressive, and LucasArts has put forth one phenomenal game after another. On the other hand, Core Design just couldn't do the original *Tomb Raider* justice with its sequels, and even Maxis' *SimCity 3000* doesn't quite capture the original magic.

The first *Uprising*, you may recall, was the first game on the shelves that combined elements of real-time strategy games and first-person shooters. The designers at Cyclone might have had an easier task at hand in developing the sequel if Activision hadn't given us *Battlezone* in the meantime; that game raised the ante considerably and made the *Uprising 2* developers' jobs even harder. Their new game builds on *Uprising*'s framework, but only in certain areas; the graphics and the interface have been satisfyingly overhauled, but there's not much new here in terms of gameplay.



Without any AAVs or SAMs around, taking out these enemy ships will be a daunting task for your forces.

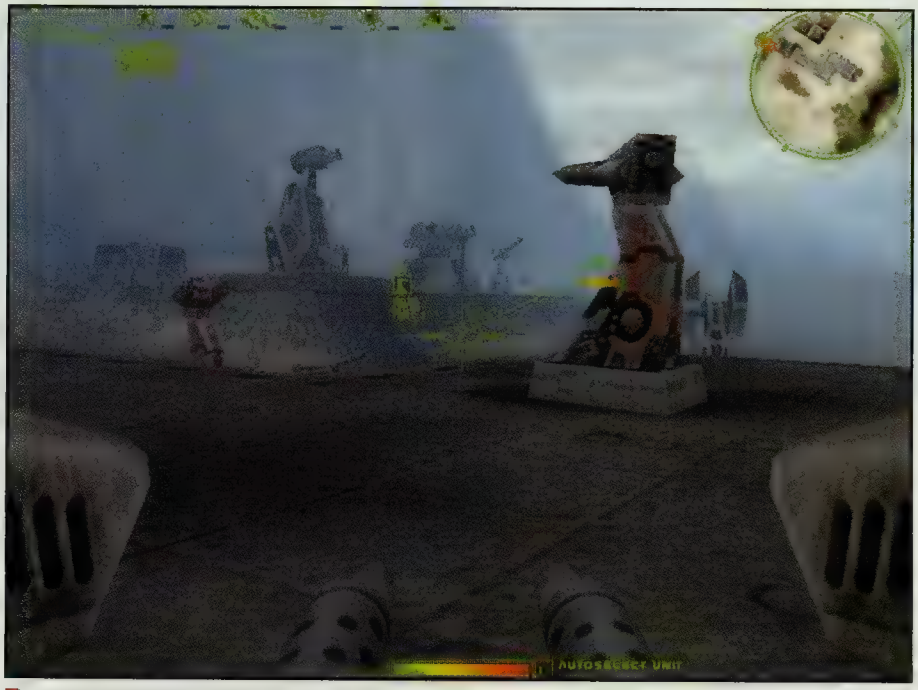
Set in the midst of a futuristic war between our human descendants and the evil, extraterrestrial Trich, *Uprising 2* puts you back in charge of a powerful Wraith hovertank and all manner of support units. Controlling the tank in much the same way you'd control your alter ego in a standard first-person shooter, you engage in battles to take control of various strategically located planets. Your Wraith is far more powerful than any enemy unit you'll encounter, but you can't win the war by simply driving around and blowing stuff up; you'll also need to engage in some classic real-time strategy activities like building bases and producing and commanding units like infantry, light and heavy tanks, fighters, and bombers.

Rather than build bases anywhere you'd like, you're limited to available locations called command bunkers. You claim a bunker by calling for a Citadel, a massive gun that you can control or leave to the computer to handle. You can also call in defense turrets, anti-aircraft sites, and buildings that produce power and military units.

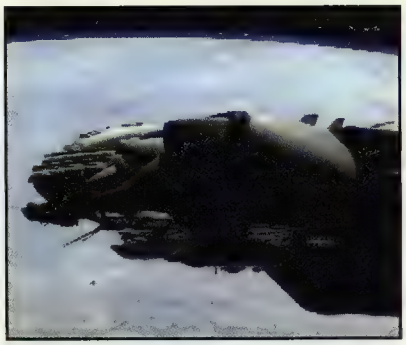
The Trich also establish Citadels and defenses. You defeat their forces by claiming their command bunkers, but before you can do that, you have to wipe out their citadels and base structures. This is one of the primary objectives of most battles in the three single-player campaigns; other goals will often accompany it.

Though this is a sequel, it's far from an evolutionary leap. In fact, if not for the stylistic differences in base structures and units, a quick glance at the screen might make you think you're playing the original *Uprising*. Cosmetically, it's improved; there's better 3D accelerator support, richer textures, and, most notably, much more satisfying unit and structure design. Earth units have a slick, industrial look, Trich architecture has an organic appearance like the creepy Shadow spaceships from "Babylon 5."

Commanding your forces has been made easier. Taking a cue from *Battlezone*'s excellent interface, Cyclone has added a context-sensitive "Auto Suggestion" routine which lets a single key execute whatever the game feels is



Your many bases are usually isolated, so defending them personally isn't always possible. It's important to fortify them as much as you can before carrying on with the mission.



This mother-ship delivers citadels and other base structures via dropship as you need them. You only see it during cut-scenes.

the most appropriate action for the situation — be it calling a particular unit into battle, ordering a Citadel, or repairing your Wraith. It's similar to the way most real-time strategy games will take a mouse-click on an empty terrain square as a Move command, while the same click on an enemy unit or structure means Attack. The auto suggestions are usually quite useful, but sometimes you'll have something else in mind. It's easy to become reliant on whacking that key in any situation, so you'll have to keep an eye on the current auto suggestion displayed in the HUD.

You spend most of the game in your Wraith, but you have the ability to jump into any of your Citadels at any time. It quickly becomes apparent that you'll have no choice; the enemy artificial intelligence times its attacks mercilessly. For example, as you begin storming an enemy command bunker, a massive attack force will often materialize next to one of your own bases. The only way to get a handle on both situations without losing a Wraith or a Citadel is to be in two places at once — which, of course, isn't possible.

You can leave a whole slew of friendly units behind to defend your bunkers while you're away, but they're not very intelligent. You'll often see a platoon of enemy infantry attacking one side of your Citadel, while one of your heavy tanks sits idle on the other side, seemingly oblivious. If you lose a defense turret, you have to jump into the appropriate Citadel, or motor over to it in your Wraith, to replace it.



Your overhead map shows you what's going on and where it's happening. You can order base buildings and maneuver your Wraith from this screen, too.

There's no way to automate such common and mundane tasks, nor is there any interface to issue your units multiple waypoints or commands more complex than simple movement, attack, and defend orders.

Even more frustrating than the mandatory micro-management are the limitations that command bunkers place on your base-building efforts. Veterans of any real-time strategy game (or of *Battlezone*) will feel severely limited. Furthermore, the bunkers are usually spaced well apart; it's not easy to set up a good defense network when your resources are so spread out. You're forced to defend each bunker as a separate base, and once you've acquired more than three or four of them, the micro-management they require stops being fun and becomes downright aggravating.

On the other hand, some gamers may consider the command bunkers a plus. The fixed locations create interesting and unique strategic scenarios that you won't find in other games, and the hectic pace of having to defend so many areas at once could be a rush to certain people. Caffeine freaks, your game has arrived!

Seriously, even with its gameplay quirks, *Uprising 2* is an engaging and refreshingly different title, and it's faithful to its ancestor. The single-player game offers three campaigns, each of which offers branching choices of missions to increase replay value. As in the first game, a between-missions screen lets you choose between several options for upgrading your Wraith, units, and buildings — you can't afford them all, so it's important to choose wisely based on your style of play.

If you enjoy both real-time strategy games and first-person shooters — but, like so many of us, are bored with the carbon-copy nature of those genres — take a look at *Uprising 2*. It can be as maddening as it is addictive, but it's definitely a change of pace.

— Joel Durham Jr.

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

79%

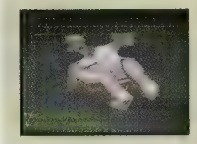
HIGHS: Excellent graphics; nifty looking ships and structures; streamlined interface.

LOWS: Too much micro-management; poor unit AI.

BOTTOM LINE: A decent but flawed follow-up to the original game, *Uprising 2* could have been much better.

The Units You'll Lead to Destroy

As you work your way through *Uprising 2*, you'll keep your forces upgraded with the latest battlefield technology, but the basic units remain consistent. Here's what you'll be leading:



Wraith: Armed with both a laser and one or more secondary weapon systems, your super-powered hovertank is, hands down, the most powerful mobile unit on the battlefield. As you progress through the campaign, you'll have the opportunity to add weapons and upgrade existing ones.



Infantry: These are your basic foot soldiers. They may seem weak compared to armored units, but they come armed with explosive charges which makes them deadly against enemy base structures.



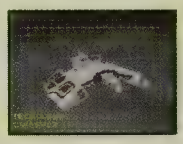
Light Tank: The perfect anti-infantry vehicle, light tanks are quick and maneuverable, which also makes them ideal for knocking out enemy turrets. They don't stand much of a chance against heavy enemy vehicles, though.



Heavy Tank: These fortified weapons platforms are effective against anything you'll encounter. They can take quite a beating, too, which is fortunate because of their slow and bulky chassis.



AAV (Aerial Assault Vehicle): Fighter planes of the future, these quick and nimble ships rain death upon enemies of all types. Fast enough to evade most turrets, their biggest fear is enemy SAM sites.



Bomber: When you're ready to clear out an enemy base, these are your best friends. Bombers make short work of buildings of any type — not to mention any ground units that happen to be in the area. They're slow and vulnerable, though, so it's important to provide plenty of covering fire.

Extreme Tennis

CATEGORY: Sports **DEVELOPER:** HeadGames **PUBLISHER:** HeadGames, (612) 942-5202, *www.headgames.net* **REQUIRED:** Windows 95/98; Double-speed CD-ROM drive; Pentium 100; 16MB RAM; 70MB hard drive space **WE RECOMMEND:** Quad-speed CD-ROM drive; Pentium 166; 32MB RAM; 3D accelerator (Direct3D)
MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS: Modem: 28.8; IPX; Serial Modem; Max Players: 2

Here's another HeadGames turd that's a waste of hard-drive space at any price.

HeadGames has garnered itself quite a reputation these days among gamers in the know. Not exactly a good reputation; it's more along the lines of the reputation holy water and wooden stakes have with the vampire crowd.

The steady stream of low-cost, low-quality software coming out of this company is disturbing, especially when you look at the sales figures; people are buying these games in droves — never mind that most of them are poorly designed at best and nonfunctional at worst. The real tragedy is when a new PC owner picks up one of these games, fires it up, and thinks, "If *this* is what computer gaming is all about, I'll stick with spreadsheets and E-mail."

Extreme Tennis, the latest in HeadGames' "Extreme Series" (which was launched with *eXtreme PaintBrawl*, the lowest-rated game in *PC Gamer* history), carries on this infamous tradition. At the top of the list of its many faults is the fact that *Extreme Tennis* eschews the advances of the last four years in computer programming, bringing back some of the annoying trappings of the old MS-DOS operating system. Sure, it'll work through Windows 95/98 — in fact, the game *requires* you to have Windows 95/98 — but once you get it installed, you'll travel back in time to experience such DOS arcana as audio card configuration and game controller incompatibility. I loaded the game on two different systems; I managed to get the sound working on one, but couldn't get a gamepad to work on either.

When you start the game, you're taken to the Pro Shop. This "3D virtual tour" adds nothing to the experience and only serves to annoy, because you can't avoid it; in order to get out on the court and play, you have to select a player each time before starting, even if you just want to continue a previous tournament. You can also select one of four racquets and specialized shoes for each specific playing surface, but I found no difference in actual gameplay no matter which I chose.

If the rest of the game were of the same quality as the graphics, *Extreme Tennis* might be worth playing. The stadiums, courts, and player models look pretty good, and the animations, while a bit stiff at times, are acceptable. Audio is sparse but adequate, consisting of some polite clapping by the crowd, the convincing sound of a ball on a racquet, and an announcer that gives you the current score.

That's about all the good that can be said about this game, though. Trying to control your on-screen player is frustrating, mainly because you have to wait for the swing animation to end before you regain control over the action. You have a variety of shot types to choose from, but you don't even have to hit a key to return a shot if you don't want to. Get within range of the ball (and the game is very forgiving in this area), and your player will automatically swing.

Sometimes you can't move, because the computer has determined that you're already in position to return a shot. Other times, it won't let you move because the game has decided it wants you to dive for the next shot. Yet another control problem is caused by the way you hit different shots; two buttons deliver four different shot types, depending on which direction you press the direction pad or arrow keys. Too often, the button-press won't register, and you'll go running in whatever direction you chose instead of swinging at the ball.



The graphics and animations are actually pretty good, though the animations are a bit stiff at times; it's a shame the rest of the game is so dreadful.



Every time you start the game, you have to come here to select a player, racket, and shoes. It's a mystery why you can't do this from a simple menu within the game.

The ultimate game-killer, though, is the sad artificial intelligence of the computer opponent. As with Blue Byte's *Game, Net, and Match!*, it took me about 15 minutes to figure out a foolproof, winning strategy against the computer. At least the Blue Byte game had a multi-player option that let you find some challenge by playing other humans; *Extreme Tennis*' offers multi-play, too, but its control problems prevent you from getting any enjoyment out of it. And two players can't sit down at the same computer to go head-to-head.

There are plenty of other problems with *Extreme Tennis* (no way to save a game during matches, a display bug that keeps you from seeing the game or set scores, etc.), but you get the idea. This is a mess of a game. No matter how much you like tennis or how low the price, avoid it.

—Rob Smolka

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

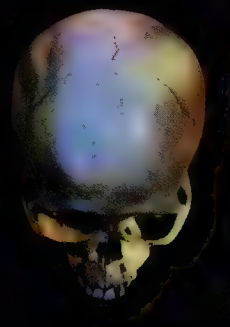
14%

HIGHS: It's better than *eXtreme Paintbrawl*; graphics are decent.

LOWS: Bad control scheme; sloppy programming; compatibility problems; abysmal computer opponents.

BOTTOM LINE: We'll spare you the "extreme" jokes this time — this game is just plain bad.

THE DEADLIEST CREATURES
IN THE UNIVERSE ARE ABOUT TO
MEET THEIR MATCH...





ALIENS VERSUS PREDATOR

- **SCALE WALLS** and elevator shafts as an Alien and advance with frightening speed as you attack to devour your opponents.
- **STALK YOUR PREY** as the deadly Predator using wrist blades, shoulder cannons and invisibility as you surprise attack your enemies.
- **LOCK AND LOAD** as a Marine using motion trackers, pulse rifles and flame-throwers to eradicate these vile creatures.

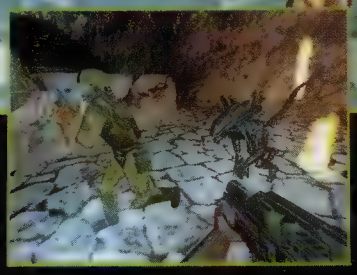
The three most ferocious species in the universe are pitted against one another in a bloodthirsty battle for the ultimate prize — survival. Take your stand as a Marine, a Predator, or an Alien, where one wrong move turns you from hunter into prey.

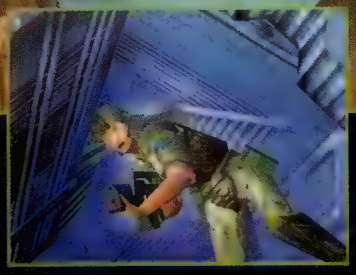
- **AVP DELIVERS** the most shockingly realistic first person and multi-player action with heart-stopping suspense and shocking realism.
- **OVER 50 LEVELS** of enormous, terrifyingly realistic game environments offer virtually unlimited replay to let you hone your combat skills to a razor-sharp edge.
- **FEATURING THREE OF THE BADDEST BEINGS** in the science fiction world — who is supreme warrior? Cooperate or compete with your friends using the full multi-player networking option.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #204

Actual Game Screens

OTHER.





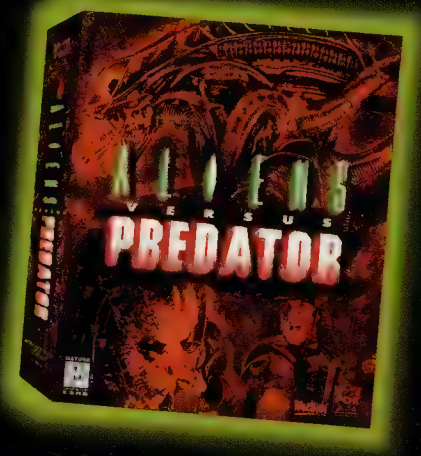


Windows® 95/98 CD-ROM

"This game could be one of our all time favorites!"
— Computer Gaming World

"Scaring the crap out of the big boys."
— PC Accelerator

"Is there anyone that doesn't want to play this one?"
— PC Gamer



REBELLION

Environmental Audio™ by CREATIVE

MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

FREE

www.foxinteractive.com

FOX INTERACTIVE

ALIENS ©1986 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. PREDATOR ©1987 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. ALIENS VS. PREDATOR ©1999 Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. All Rights Reserved. "Twentieth Century Fox," "Fox" and their associated logos are property of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation. Windows is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation. ©1998 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. The 3Dfx Interactive logo, Voodoo Graphics™, Voodoo Rush™, Voodoo Banshee™ and Voodoo²™ are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. in the USA and in other select countries. All Rights Reserved.

Wargasm

CATEGORY: Action-Strategy **DEVELOPER:** DID **PUBLISHER:** DID, (877) 463-6472, *www.did-us.com* **REQUIRED:** Windows 95/98; Double-speed CD-ROM drive; Pentium 166; 32MB RAM; 315MB hard-drive space; 3D accelerator (Direct3D); DirectX 6-compatible sound card **WE RECOMMEND:** Pentium II 266MHz; 64MB RAM
MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS: Modem; IPX; TCP/IP

It's too bad DID didn't deliver on its promises — this could have been a terrific game.

The box copy says "Pick up and play — all the immersive qualities of a sim with none of the learning curve — just pure enjoyment!"

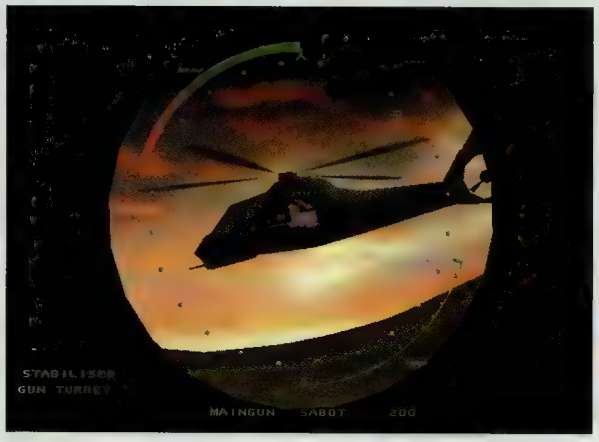
I beg to differ. This beautiful but ill-designed mixture confronts you with a learning curve the size of an Olympic ski-jump. Better to say: "All the complexity of a hard-core sim with none of the sense of accomplishment you get from mastering the controls."

Okay, let's get the plot out of the way first: It's some time in the near future, and all the nations of the world have decided that since real wars are too expensive to wage anymore, they will now settle their differences in a cyber-arena called the "World Wide War Web." Not exactly an original concept — but a good enough foundation for a decent game. So what's wrong with *Wargasm*? Simply put, it's an action-strategy hybrid with simulation trappings that doesn't work very well at any of the above.

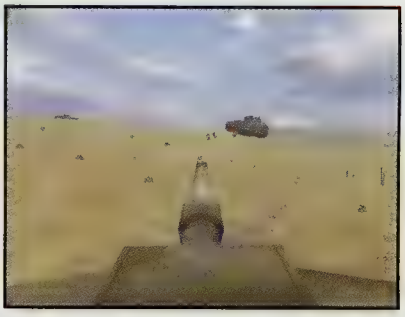
Until recently, DID has been known for its highly competitive air combat sims like *EF2000* and *F-22 Air Dominance Fighter*. Why the company decided at this late date to jump onto the real-time strategy-action bandwagon, alongside confirmed successes like *Uprising* and *Battlezone*, is a puzzlement. The whole genre is aging before our eyes; turn-based games are experiencing a renaissance, and there are so many good real-time strategy games already on the market that one more is hardly going to be noticed unless it truly has something tremendously new and exciting to offer. That's not the case with *Wargasm*.

To be fair about it, the game's graphics are superb: Vehicles, terrain, damage effects — all are state of the art. It's downhill from there on, however. The tutorial missions consist of a quartet of confusing engagements that do little to explain how to succeed in an actual battle. If you fly the tutorial for your attack choppers, for example, you're presented with a series of glowing circles you must fly through — that might give you a feel for controlling a chopper, but it certainly has nothing whatever to do with training a combat pilot.

Strangeness abounds. The manual says the "Page Up" and "Page Down"



In addition to driving tanks and controlling infantry, you can fly attack helicopters — or take shots at them from the safety of a tank.



If the tanks and planes were easier to control, *Wargasm* could've been a good action game.



***Wargasm* has the great-looking graphics you'd expect from DID — but the gameplay isn't nearly as good.**



Explosions and other effects are certainly pretty, thanks to the new 3Dream engine.



This soldier has a BMP in his sights — but what are his buddies doing while you're watching him?

keys "increase or decrease fuse." Fuse? Are we dealing with Civil War technology, here, where fuses have to be manually set for each shell? I kept pushing those keys, and nothing — at least nothing observable — happened in the game. Maybe it applies only to missions in which demolitions are expected to be used.

The designers apparently set out with the admirable goal of creating a game that was concise, simple, and visually beautiful. But somewhere along the way, they took a wrong turn and delivered a game that is ten times as complicated as it ought to be. To assume first-person control of a unit, you must first exit the game to the strategic map, select a unit, then double-click on it. There's no way to adjust the speed of the game, and things happen so quickly that while you're planning a strategy, the enemy is constantly on the move at a pace too rapid for mere mortals to comprehend. You end up controlling a single unit which may or may not be essential to your plans, while all your other units are milling around like cattle. Some of them do the right thing; some don't.

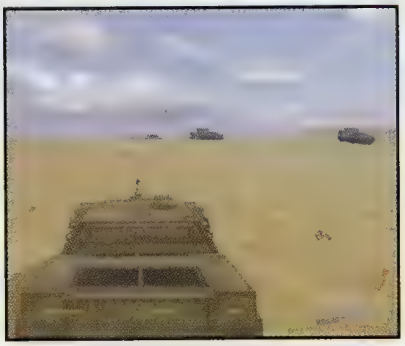
Control of individual tanks and aircraft doesn't work with any consistency. Too often, inexplicably, the tanks (or whatever) under my direct control either sat in place and spun around in circles, or suddenly decided to go *backwards*. Why, I have no idea. The manual describes four types of control, using joystick and keyboard; none of them works consistently, and all four of them require more dexterity and quicker reflexes than a 13-year-old videogame master could bring to bear. In theory, you should be able to jump right into this game and start blasting the enemy with intuitive ease. In practice, however, it's all so mystifying that you aren't allowed the pleasure of an easy-going arcade game, never mind the demanding complexity of a true strategy game.



The game can provide some spectacular moments as the battle unfolds, but getting to that point can be a confusing proposition.



Units can be grouped to move together, but — again — this is easier said than done.



Exterior views help make the game look arcade-like, but the controls are anything but.

If you try and play *Wargasm* as a straight arcade game, you'll have great fun blowing up enemy units — but you won't last long. As for mixing some actual strategy with your action, forget it. You'll either find yourself jumping back and forth every few seconds from the map to the controls of your individual units, or you'll try and play the game from the map alone, which simply isn't the point — nor is it fun.

Any game company with the guts to name a product *Wargasm* ought to be prepared to deliver what the name implies — the pleasure of simple, visceral, fast-paced combat. Instead, we get a vague, complex, poorly documented disappointment.

—William R. Trotter

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

54%

HIGHS: Superb graphics and a really classy soundtrack.

LOWS: Dreadful interface in both strategic and simulation modes; inadequate documentation and tutorials.

BOTTOM LINE: *Battlezone* doesn't have anything to worry about.

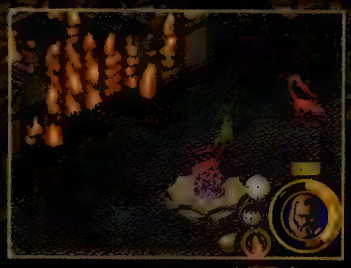
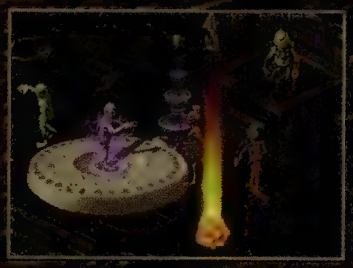
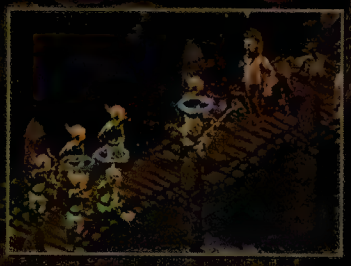
From Mythos Games, the creators of the legendary X-com series, comes another addictive real time strategy game that will take you beyond human limits...

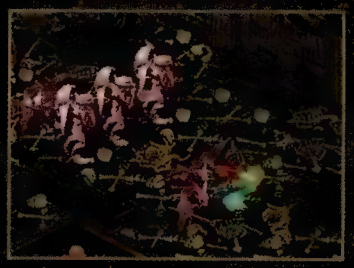
MAGIC & MAYHEM

You are all-powerful.

Release your magic against opposing sorcerers and monsters. Dispatch fireballs against your foes, invoke the apocalypse against their beasts, and infect your opponent's forces with disease. Avoid traps, solve mysteries, gather artifacts. Get ready for the quest of a lifetime...

- Summon more than 20 mighty creatures
- Battle through 36 regions and three arcane realms
- Create deadly combinations with over 60 spells
- Fast adaptive Artificial Intelligence
- No two games ever the same
- Addictive multi-player mode
- Bewitching sound track

summon your powers

BETHESDA SOFTWORKS™ • 1370 Piccard Drive, Suite 120, Rockville, MD 20850 • Fax: 301 926-8010 • www.bethsoft.com

Magic & Mayhem Copyright ©1998 Virgin Interactive Entertainment (Europe) Limited and Mythos Games Limited. All Rights Reserved.
Distributed under license from Virgin Interactive Entertainment (Europe) Limited.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #041

Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

CATEGORY: Arcade **DEVELOPER:** Oddworld Inhabitants **PUBLISHER:** GT Interactive, (425) 398-3074, *www.gtgames.com* **REQUIRED:** Windows 95/98; Double-speed CD-ROM drive; Pentium 100; 32MB RAM **WE RECOMMEND:** Pentium II 333; Supported sound card **MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS:** 16 players via LAN, 4 players via TCP/IP

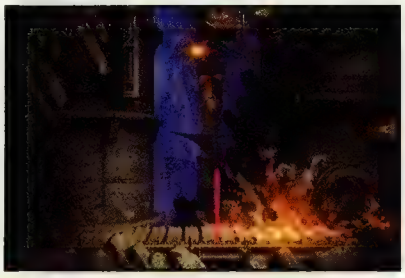
Clever and imaginative, *Abe's Exoddus* proves there's still plenty of life left in the old-fashioned 2D arcade game.

Even though it was "only" a 2D arcade game, *Oddworld: Abe's Oddyssee* was one of the more refreshing games of last year. You controlled a defenseless little critter named Abe, whose race (the Mudokons) was thrown into slavery by oppressive bad guys (the Glukkons). The only way to save your people was by solving a number of cleverly designed puzzles and effectively utilizing Abe's small vocabulary to lead your friends to safety.

The action continues in *Abe's Exoddus*. After receiving a hero's welcome back home, Abe is subject to a vision of even *more* enslaved Mudokons. It turns out that Abe's people are being forced to dig up the bones of their ancestors, which are used as ingredients in Glukkon beer. The Mudokon slaves don't realize this, however — because their eyelids have been sewn shut.

So Abe grabs five of his buddies and leads a rescue mission to the evil SoulStorm Brewery, ready to kick ass and take names. When his irresponsible escorts are incapacitated after drinking several gallons of SoulStorm bubbly, Abe is left all alone to destroy his oppressors and rescue his fellow Mudokons.

Abe's Exoddus continues the Oddworld tradition of well-designed characters and consistent art direction. The animation looks natural enough to make you look forward to the Oddworld feature film that's reportedly in the works.



Abe hops into a mine cart and plows into everyone in sight. Don't squish your friends!



By chanting from a hidden spot, Abe can possess enemies and have them go on mad shooting sprees.

Full-motion video is used sparingly but effectively, and there are some very smooth transitions from screen to screen where the camera pulls back or zooms up to a different level.

The game's roots can be traced back to arcade-style games like *Flashback* or *Heart of Darkness*, but there's generally more emphasis on using your noodle than on reflexes. Aside from the rare run-and-jump puzzles, you'll need to use Abe's ability to tip-toe past guards, grab onto ledges, and forcefully expel gas from his rear (or, as the copy on the box puts it, "Use Abe's farts to blow stuff up!").

Once Abe encounters one of his fellow Mudokons, he'll have to exchange words. Abe can say different things and give orders — like "Hello," "Follow me," "Wait," and "Sorry." He can also beat down his fellow Mudokons with a mighty slap. Sometimes that's the only way to get a Mudokon slave's attention, but it can make them angry, so Abe will have to pat them on the shoulder and apologize until they settle down and start taking orders. This goofy interaction never gets old, and abusing your friends is delightful fun.

Since you score points based on how many Mudokons you save, it's in your best interests to keep them alive. If you can lead your blind friends into a room with a ring of flying birds and begin chanting, a magical portal will open up, and your buddies will jump through to safety. Of course, you don't *have* to save the little guys, and it's always amusing — in a politically incorrect way — to talk them over cliffs or into rock-crushers.

Oddworld's one major flaw is that it gets absurdly difficult from time to time, and Abe will plunge to his death (or be crushed or eviscerated) many more times than you'd like. You don't die as frequently and pointlessly as in, say, *Heart of Darkness*, but it still gets pretty bad (when you get to the jungle level with the killer leeches...good luck). Fortunately, you can quick-save at any point in the game, so dying doesn't mean having to start the level over from the beginning; that tends to reduce the frustration factor.

And even if it does make you a little crazy sometimes, *Abe's Exoddus*'s humor, clever design, and great visuals escalate it far above the generic 2D side-scroller. If you got a kick out of the original *Abe's Oddyssee*, you owe it to yourself to give this a try.

—Colin Williamson

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

90%

HIGHS: Innovative and beautiful videogame-style fun with some nicely designed puzzles.

LOWS: Gets very difficult very fast.

BOTTOM LINE: *Abe's Exoddus* is a unique action-puzzle hybrid with plenty of character.

Luftwaffe Commander

CATEGORY: Simulation **DEVELOPER:** Eagle Interactive **PUBLISHER:** SSI, (800) 601-7529, *www.ssionline.com* **REQUIRED:** Windows 95/98; 8x CD-ROM drive; Pentium 166; 32MB RAM; 195MB hard-drive space; Mouse; 3D accelerator card (Direct3D compatible) **WE RECOMMEND:** Pentium II 300; 64MB RAM; Joystick, throttle, and pedals **MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS:** Hotseat: No; LAN: 2-10 players; TCP/IP: 2-10 players; Internet: 2-10 players; Modem: 2 players

The latest entry in the World War Two sweepstakes offers something different, but also feels rushed and out-of-date.

You have to wonder about the logic of taking a nice little niche sim like *Luftwaffe Commander* and thrusting it out, apparently unfinished, into a market crammed with similarly themed and well-reviewed sims from major publishers. Left to percolate for a few more months, Luftwaffe would have been fairly clear of the *European Air War*, *WWII Fighters*, and *Combat Flight Simulator* juggernaut and might have stood a better chance.

The extra time also would've given the developers a chance to smooth the rough spots and bring the terrain graphics up to snuff. By that time, gamers coming off a few months of generally similar WWII action might have welcomed the refreshing change of pace offered by this promising little sim.

But that's not what happened. SSI, a niche publisher with a strong and loyal fan base, may have thought it could compete with the big guns, only to find itself flying into heavy flak. That's too bad; *Luftwaffe Commander* had some real potential. The developer, Eagle Interactive, showed promise in some elements of *Sabre Ace*, the failed Korean War sim it designed for Virgin; there was reason to expect the company could pull off a decent game, given a long leash and the backing of a company more experienced with sims. And SSI, for its part, had shown with *Su-27 Flanker* that it can nurture a small developer through a tough project and create a classic. For some reason, though, these two solid elements never really jelled.

Luftwaffe Commander is unique in offering a WWII combat sim with a wholly German perspective. The campaign, planes, and missions are based around one of the most fearsome air forces in history, with some flyable Allied planes offered for diversity. Goering's Luftwaffe fought in different theaters, campaigns, and wars for almost a decade until it was finally ground to a nub by simple attrition. Aircraft like the Me-110, Me-109, and Focke-Wulf 190 were some of the best engineered planes to fly in WWII.



Enemy AI while you are dogfighting is okay, but nothing extraordinary. When it comes to ground collisions, the AI seems non-existent.

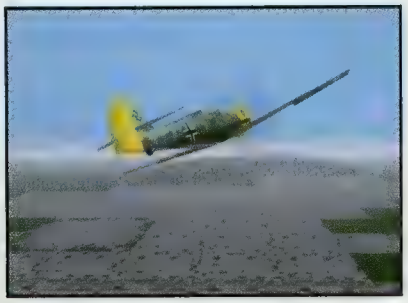
The game has an epic feel, with a single multi-theater campaign encompassing the entire sweep of the war. You begin with Germany's "dry run" of the Luftwaffe during the Spanish Civil War in 1937, where the Heinkel He-51 biplane gives way to the superior Bf 109D fighter. From there, you move on to WWII and the Invasion of France, the Battle of Britain, the Eastern Front, and the Western Front — picking up the Bf 109E, Bf 109F, Bf 109G, and Me-262 along the way. The Spitfire Mk 1, P-39 Airacobra, P-51D Mustang, and the weird little Russian I-16 "Rat" (a first, I think) are also flyable in stand-alone missions. But where is the Focke-Wulf 190? Its absence in a Luftwaffe sim is glaring.

Other than the lack of the 190, the structure of the game is solid, and it gives a generally good feel for the dynamics and course of the German air war, which turned bad slowly and irrevocably. Mission design is good when it works, and the different shell items provide plenty of background, including video clips of first-person accounts from German pilots. Campaigns are scripted rather than dynamic, and while this might hamper replay value, it makes for tight, interesting missions. Unfortunately, things start to deteriorate fast once you actually get moving.

The first order of business is the artificial intelligence, which runs the gamut from merely acceptable to downright appalling. Wingmen are not only useless, but dangerous. Both friendly and enemy aircraft seem to have no sense of self-preservation, and collision avoidance is left totally in your hands.



The plane exteriors are moderately detailed, but they pale in comparison to those seen in Jane's *WWII Fighters* and other games, and they lack detailed visible damage.



Terrain has a blocky, patchwork look in far too many places. This is particularly noticeable in cities, where everything looks gray.



Go ahead, run into him — chances are the damage will be minimal, since collision detection is sporadic. Good thing, since collisions are common in the game.

This can be nerve-wracking in close formations. Enemies perform fairly routine (and, eventually, predictable) maneuvers. Your wingmen are equally predictable: they run into the ground as much as the Italian Air Force. The game is also riddled with bugs — from missions that won't end properly, to a failure to give credit for kills, to some indestructible aircraft and damage-free collisions. It is clearly not a finished game.

It's too bad the AI is so weak and the game so buggy, since the feel of the general flight model is very solid. Spins and spin recovery feel very believable, and the planes have a nice sense of heft to them. Individual plane modeling is not quite so precise, with some diversions from historical specs that only the hardest of hardcore historical aviation buff would notice. Damage modeling is good as it relates to performance degradation, but there are none of the nice visual cues we're seeing in the other WWII games. There are two general flight models: the arcade-like Iron Cross and the full-realism Knights Cross. There are also plenty of realism toggles for the usual range of settings like fuel, ammo, stalls, blackouts, and so on, making it fairly accessible to novices but meaty enough for the air combat buff.

Visually, *Luftwaffe* lags far behind the competition. Cockpits look decent, if a little too pat and clean. Gauges are clear and readable in both standard and 3D cockpit mode, but they're not functional in 3D. The fixed viewing angles overlap each other by about 10 percent, so there are no blind spots. The padlock mode maintains a persistent lock no matter where the target is (even out of sight), which may bother picky sim fans — but since aircraft are pretty hard to spot in this game anyway, I welcomed the feature.

The rest of the visuals are about a year out of date. Plane and object detail is about average, but explosions are poorly done and the terrain is a real disappointment. The patchwork of repeated textures that comprise portions the landscape makes for some disconcerting vistas, such as sections of Paris that look like a herringbone suit with a big pointy thing (the Eiffel Tower?) sticking out of the middle. It's not a pretty sight.

Performance is nothing to write home about, considering the lightweight detail in the visuals: the more detailed *Combat Flight Simulator* runs more smoothly. Even the menus seem clumsy and crowded, with buttons that are too small and an Options section that runs off the screen.

Since *Luftwaffe Commander* takes on the air war in Europe from a detailed German perspective, if offers plenty of action not found in the other sims. But the overall dated look and unfinished feel of the game make it more a near miss than a success. It bears some of the marks of an abandoned game: shoved out the door prematurely and unloved. Too bad; it could have grown up to be something special.

— T. Liam McDonald

The Luftwaffe At War

The Spanish Civil War

War erupted in Spain when Franco's fascist Nationalists rebelled against the left-leaning Royalists. Europe, which loves to get embroiled in wars, decided it'd meddle and make things much worse. France and Russia aided the Royalists, while Germany and Italy aided the Nationalists, thus turning a minor civil war into a nightmarish bloodbath. Germany, desperately wanting to try out its new toys, bombed the peaceful village of Guernica flat because it was full of unarmed civilians.

Invasion of France

If anyone deserved to be overrun by Huns, it was the French, who had a history of overrunning their neighbors going back centuries. Spearheaded by the overwhelming superiority of the Luftwaffe, the German invasion in 1940 took only six weeks, after which the French would gladly sing the Horst Wessel March at the drop of a Deutschmark. Ominously for the Luftwaffe, the coup de grace of troops cornered at Dunkirk was prevented by British Spitfires and the short ranges of the Bf-109.

Battle of Britain

A couple of months later, the Germans got a good taste of those Spitfires in the Battle of Britain. The Nazis rained death on London for weeks, diverting strikes from bases and airfields in a foolish attempt to "break the will" of the British people. The Spitfires and Hurricanes held their own, and while equally matched in numbers, the Luftwaffe soon found itself worn down and unable to replace aircraft fast enough. It gave up and decided to go annoy the Russians.

Eastern Front

Russia was not famous for its air force. It was outclassed in tactics and outgunned in machinery, but it could throw a seemingly endless supply of pilots and planes at the Germans. The sheer weight of numbers rather than skill or hardware made the air war in the East brutal and hotly contested.

Western Front

The game picks up with the Western Front, after the Americans begin to turn the tide. Day and night bombing on Germany pulverized the nation and nearly shattered the Luftwaffe, but it put up a good fight through the Battle of Berlin.

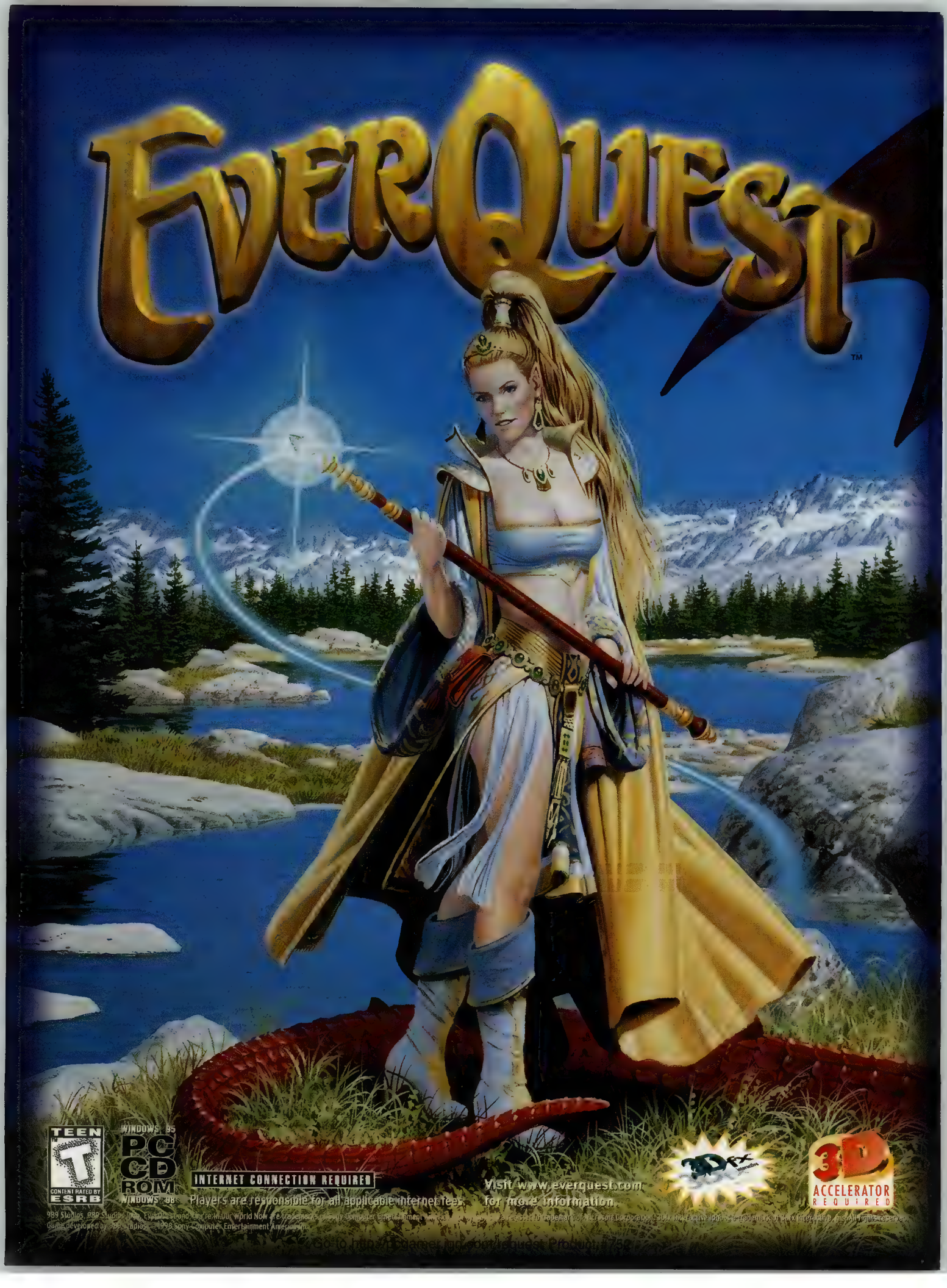
PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

60%

HIGHS: Detailed, historically accurate; good general flight modeling; solid mission structure.

LOWS: Unfinished feel; plenty of bugs; shoddy terrain graphics; weak AI on both sides.

BOTTOM LINE: With more care, this coulda been great; instead, it's just a blueprint for a better game.


EverQuest
TM
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB
WINDOWS 95
PC
CD
ROM
WINDOWS 98
INTERNET CONNECTION REQUIRED
Players are responsible for all applicable internet fees.
Visit www.everquest.com
for more information.
3Dfx
3D
ACCELERATOR
REQUIRED

You're in our world now!™

Welcome to the world of EverQuest, a massive 3D-multiplayer on-line fantasy role-playing game.



- Adventure online in a world that can be populated by more than 1000 other players
- Journey across continents filled with perilous dungeons, eerie crypts and mysterious underwater landscapes
- Choose from 12 unique races and 14 distinct classes
- Immerse yourself in a beautiful 3D environment in hi-resolution 16-bit color



"I hate EverQuest. It's cutting into my free time and playing havoc with my social calendar. I just can't stop playing this game!"
— Michael "Phoenix" Wolf: PC Gamer

"EverQuest has completely taken over my life."
— Chris "Odinsson" Kramer: Voodoo

"The deepest, richest, and most graphically advanced of the RPGs yet."
— Big Brother: GamePro



"Already the beta version is providing a surpassingly immersive experience — one that will likely see defections from Britannia."
— Rob "Galgorth" Smith: PC Accelerator Magazine



UNIFIED GAMERS ONLINE
E3 1998
BEST OF SHOW
WWW.UGO.NET

989 STUDIOS™

A SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT GROUP COMPANY

THIS AIN'T NO SKINS GAME.



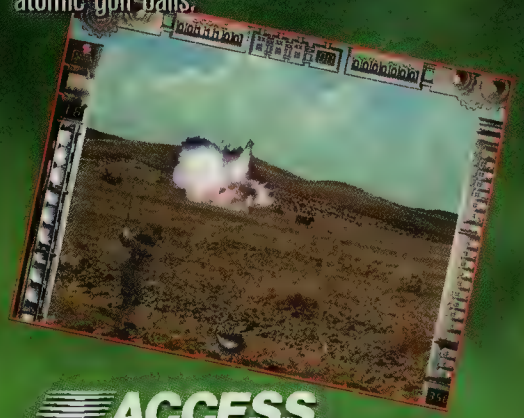


On the mystical **Mojo Bay Country Club,** you can curse your rival's shot and watch it corkscrew into a shark-infested water hazard.

Live the dream by inviting your fiercest adversary to a game of Death Matchplay on the **Dimension X Battlefield!**

WWW.LINKSEXTREME.COM

At **Armadillo Al's Demolition Driving Range,** you can turn robotic snobs into toast with atomic golf balls.



Links LS EXTREME

ACCESS SOFTWARE INCORPORATED

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #017

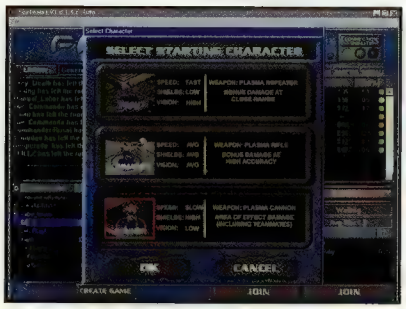
FireTeam

CATEGORY: Action **DEVELOPER:** Multitude **PUBLISHER:** Multitude, (888) 689-TEAM, *www.fireteam.com* **REQUIRED:** Windows 95/98; Double-speed CD-ROM drive; Pentium166; 32MB RAM; 55MB hard-drive space; 28.8Kbps modem; Full-duplex sound card; Mouse **WE RECOMMEND:** Pentium 200; 250MB hard-drive space; 56.6Kbps modem **MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS:** Serial: No; Modem: No; IPX: No; Spawnable: No; Free Internet play: Yes; Maximum number of players: 12

Multitude spent two years perfecting the first truly effective real-time voice feature for Internet gaming — but it's tied to a disappointing game.

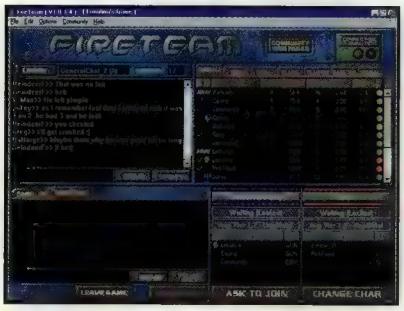
When Multitude began developing *FireTeam*, a squad-level combat game designed solely for multiplayer action over the Internet, one of the highest priorities was to create a voice-chat system that would let players talk to teammates without degrading game performance. The concept has a lot of appeal, especially for anyone who's played other team-oriented Internet games: typing and fighting are mutually exclusive, and the ability to speak directly to your teammates could really improve the experience.

Now that *FireTeam*'s gone live, I can report that the voice-chat technology works better than I thought possible. It's not perfect, but most of the time you're able to hear your teammates loud and clear through the headset that ships with the game. A fine achievement, to be sure — but it's blunted by the fact that the game just isn't much fun.



Unit types vary in speed, armor, and field of vision, and each has its own special ability.

Some will call *FireTeam*'s simple game design refreshing, but compared to other current online games like *Tribes* and *Team Fortress*, it's a little on the shallow side. *FireTeam* pits two or three squads — each consisting of one to four players armed initially with plasma guns, grenades, and mines — in arenas where they compete in one of four game types. Deathmatch and Capture the Flag are self-explanatory; Gunball plays like football, except you carry the ball into a goal rather than crossing a line; and in BaseTag, you destroy your opponents' base stations while defending your own. True line-of-sight rules mean that teammates see stuff you can't, making the voice chat a vital component of play. And Multitude has worked hard to make it simple for users to join "companies" and compete as teams in league play and official tourneys.



Find a game in the *FireTeam* Lobby, then right-click on its name to preview the map — a good idea if you want to stay competitive.

It sounds good on paper; in practice, it's pretty uninspiring. One problem is the game's speed — the characters move so slowly, they almost look like mimes running against the wind. Another is the small selection of weapons; with only one primary gun and a mere handful of secondary weapons, there's not much room for improvising cool tactics to take advantage of the firepower you're packing. And the control scheme is a clumsy affair that won't let you use the mouse to control movement; instead, you aim (in any direction) with the mouse while doing everything else with your other hand.

It doesn't take a genius to figure out that an online-only game isn't worth much if there isn't anyone around to play with or against, and the largest number of people I've ever found online at one time was around 40; during weekday morning sessions, that number fell into the low single-digits. You know things aren't going well when there are more reviews of a game posted on the online game sites than there are people logged on to play it.

Why the lackluster response? Part of the reason could be that you can only buy *FireTeam* directly from Multitude. Then there's the $59.95 price tag, and the fact that the average *FireTeam* player acts like he's about 14 years old (a suspicion supported by the fact that I logged on once during the day, and the first thing the sysop asked me was why I was out of school).



Imagine playing soccer against opponents armed with plasma rifles, grenades, mines, and deployable turrets, and you've got a good idea of what a game of Gunball is like. Too bad it's not as much fun as it sounds.

Even with 40 players online (about 90 percent of whom are the same bunch that are always there), getting into a game can take forever; many players are already in games, and a player ranking system means newbies often have to find other newbies to play with. The idea is to keep teams evenly matched by keeping newcomers out of veterans' games, and vice versa; that's great, but it further reduces the number of gamers you can play with. One night, I waited nearly an hour before getting into a game, even though I tried to join every available game and created many for others to join.

Many reviewers have raved about *FireTeam* — but the proof is in the pudding: if only a quarter of the game's beta testers had bought this game when it went commercial, there should be at least ten times as many players as I found online. The one thing *FireTeam* has going for it is its voice-chat technology; here's hoping Multitude can license it to other game developers and bring in enough money to develop a better game.

—Steve Poole

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

45%

HIGHS: Voice-chat feature is a real achievement; game's community supported by Multitude.

LOWS: A meager arsenal; shortage of opponents and teammates; awkward control scheme.

BOTTOM LINE: One great feature doesn't make for a great game.

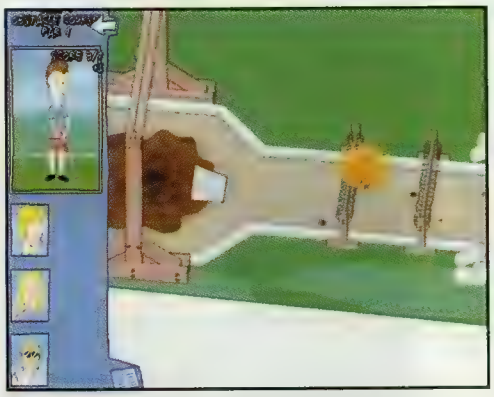
Beavis & Butt-head Bunghole in One

CATEGORY: Arcade **DEVELOPER:** The Illusions Game Company **PUBLISHER:** GT Interactive, (425) 398-3074, *www.gtgames.com* **REQUIRED:** Windows 95/98; Quad-speed CD-ROM drive; Pentium 133; 16MB RAM; 50MB hard-drive space **WE RECOMMEND:** 8x CD-ROM drive; Pentium 200; 32MB RAM **MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS:** Four players on one computer

Unfortunately, this game's biggest selling point is its weakest link: the tiresome commentary of its lead characters.

They're past their prime, but Beavis and Butt-head, for better or worse, have managed to become a part of our collective consciousness. Even the lamest attempt at mimicking the pair's signature laughs is recognized by most television-watching Americans, and many of us will still crack a smile when we hear it. But even the most die-hard fan of the show has to admit that we're not talking about high comedy here; this stuff appeals to us at some deeper, lower level — somewhere down around the groin area, generally speaking.

What keeps us paying attention, though, is the sheer brashness of the show and the anticipation of the next offensive, stupid, or just plain off-the-wall comment or situation. *Beavis and Butt-head Bunghole in One* has these same elements. Unfortunately, they're in very short supply; you'll have heard just about everything the boys have to offer within the first round of this otherwise decent attempt at a miniature golf game.



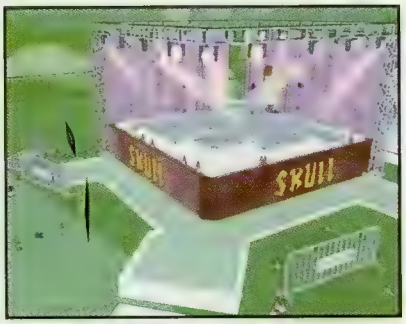
Many of the holes have some kind of trap that will cost you a penalty stroke. Whoa! That was cool!

The course (yes, there's just one — another disappointment) consists of 18 holes inspired by Beavis, Butt-head, and the characters and locations that make up the strange world Mike Judge created for his MTV animated series. Some of the hole designs are pretty clever, and the course as a whole is fun to play. The interface is simplicity itself: you aim your shot by clicking on the ball and dragging your mouse back in the opposite direction. The farther back you go, the more powerful your swing will be. It's simple to understand, and it works pretty well for the task at hand.

The graphics won't win any awards, but they're clean and uncomplicated and get the job done nicely. Each hole has some kind of animation or special effect to provide appropriate obstacles between the tee and the cup: a hole inspired by gym teacher Buzzcut's military background includes mud and a minefield your ball can fall into; another, inspired by Cornholio's love for caffeine, features giant spinning coffee cups.

You can play the game as Beavis, Butt-head, Todd, Principal McVicker, Mr. Van Driessen, or the boys' neighbor, Tom Anderson. They're all represented by talking heads when it's not their turn, and each is fully animated when he has his putter in his hands (insert B&B-style joke here).

Other than the fact that there is only one 18-hole course, the game's biggest failing is the repetitive commentary provided by the cast. Even during the first round of play, you'll start hearing the same comments over and over again. Yeah, the phrase "Go use the ball washer; your balls are filthy," is funny in a Beavis and Butt-head kind of way the first time you hear it — but by the third or fourth time, you'd do anything to be able to shut him up, and you can't (you can turn the speech off, but you still have to sit through the animations and read text captions of the same overused jokes before you can get on with the game). Even more annoying is the fact that you can't just play a quick one-player game; you will always have three of the other characters along for the ride, all adding their scintillating comments.



This hole rules! If we were in a band like Skull, we'd definitely score! He-he!

Perhaps the best way to illustrate this game's shelf life is to tell you how things went when I first loaded it up. When the familiar Beavis and Butt-head intro music started, a crowd gathered around my desk, excited to see if the game was any good. Half of them were gone by the fifth hole; and as I worked my way to the final couple of holes for the first time, I was sitting by myself. (Compare that to the boys' graphic adventure, *Beavis and Butt-head in Virtual Stupidity*, which always had at least two or three amused onlookers from start to finish). Nearly all of the available in-game banter is spent in the first round, and — other than trying to better your score — there's not much reason to play again.

Bunghole in One isn't a bad game, but it doesn't provide more than a couple of hours of entertainment. Even at its low price point ($19.99), it's not a very good value.

—Rob Smolka

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

53%

HIGHS: Fun for the first several holes; Mike Judge provides the voices.

LOWS: Only one course; limited commentary gets tedious; slow play.

BOTTOM LINE: This might be a good party game, but the party will be over when it reaches the end of its limited humor.

Check us out on the enclosed CD

TRY EarthLink Sprint for FREE and

FASTEN your seat belt!

EarthLink™ Sprint® launches you into the Web with UNLIMITED INTERNET ACCESS at speeds up to 56K, and more access points nationwide than any other ISP.

AND NOW PC GAMERS CAN TRY EARTHLINK SPRINT FOR THE INCREDIBLE LOW PRICE OF **FREE!**

FREE SETUP
$25 SAVINGS

&

FREE TRIAL
FOR 2 WEEKS*

GET ROCKET-FAST INTERNET ACCESS WITH ALL THE PERKS:

- Unlimited Internet access at speeds up to 56K
- Local access nationwide and international roaming capabilities
- Free, reliable email
- Free 6MB of webspace for your own Web site
- A fully customizable Personal StartPage℠
- 24/7 toll-free customer service and tech support
- Free subscription to bLink™, EarthLink's member magazine
- Free software like QuickTime™, RealPlayer®, and Shockwave®

And much more!

www.earthlink.net

EarthLink Sprint

Call now!
1-888-EARTHLINK, ext. 3177

www.pcgamer.com/request (Product #179)

*$19.95 per month thereafter

©1999 EarthLink Network, Inc. and Sprint Communications Company LP. Trademarks are property of their respective owners. Sprint and the Sprint logo are trademarks of Sprint Communications Company LP. EarthLink and the EarthLink logo are trademarks of EarthLink Network, Inc. All rights reserved.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #179

SCARS

CATEGORY: Racing **DEVELOPER:** Vivid Image **PUBLISHER:** Ubi Soft, (415) 547 4000, *www.ubisoft.com* **REQUIRED:** Windows 95/98; Quad-speed CD-ROM; Pentium 166; 16MB RAM; 3D accelerator card (Direct3D or Glide compatible) **WE RECOMMEND:** Pentium II 200; Supported sound card; Gamepad **MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS:** Two-player split-screen

Cutesy console-style racing finally makes its way to the PC...but is this a good thing?

If you or your friends are into videogame consoles, you've probably sat down and played *Super Mario Kart* on the Super Nintendo at least once in your life. *Super Mario Kart* was a game that made up for laughable graphics with undeniable fun, as you zipped about a flat track in go-karts, blasting the hell out of your opponents with various powerups and other knicknacks. *SCARS* (a bizarre acronym for *Super Combat Animal Racing Simulation*) is a racer that seems to pride itself on being a *Mario Kart* knockoff — and while it does a nice job of maintaining the basic play mechanics of the original, not much has been done to escalate the experience into a next-generation PC title.

If nothing else, *SCARS* could be a contender for the *PC Gamer* Award for Stupidest Plot of 1999. It's the year 3000, and supercomputers have taken over the earth. After developing emotions, the computers realize that they need a little more excitement in their tedious lives. So, they create cars with vaguely animal-like attributes and race them around for their own personal satisfaction. Personally, I'd rather weld together hideous sledgehammer-wielding biomechanical monsters and make them battle to the death over lava pits, but that's just me.

From the get-go, you're limited to one track and a handful of cars. As you rank higher and higher in the ensuing races, extra stuff like cars and tracks are unlocked. *SCARS* plays like *Mario Kart*, with a little bit of *Wipeout XL* thrown in for good measure — tracks are remarkably lush and highly animated, and there are plenty of powerups thrown into the mix. Winning a race requires more than speed and handling on your part — you'll need to effectively use the weapons strewn about the track to wreck your opponents and make yourself a nuisance. The tools of destruction range from a standard projectile beam to track barriers — you can launch a device that creates an electrical roadblock (that will wax *you* if you're not careful). To avoid these, you'll need to drive around them, or actually *jump* over them — each vehicle has the ability to hop a short distance over opponents or obstacles.

In terms of graphics, *SCARS* demonstrates what people mean when they say "console colors" — everything is bright, vivid, and Disneyesque. Track design is decent across the board, with a few interesting shortcuts and branching areas for the curious. Glide and Direct3D support is unequivocally good, with a bevy of impressive visual effects being put to use throughout each area. The team obviously spent a good deal of time tweaking pyrotechnics and spark effects, and the destruction doesn't disappoint. Sound design is a little weak, and music is the typical thrash-rock nonsense, and seems a bit out-of-place in such a cute fantasy world.

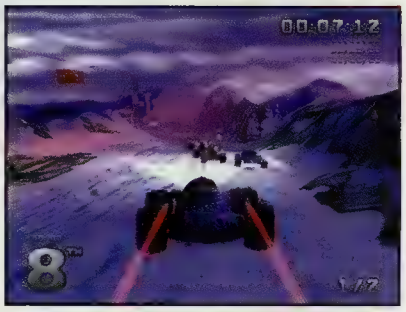
SCARS feels a lot like a rushed conversion of a videogame to PC — when entering passwords, you have to use the function keys to select each letter (ridiculous, since every PC has a fancy alphanumerical input device called a keyboard). There's also a disappointing lack of PC-style multi-player options — the only head-to-head racing you'll be doing is the two-player split-screen variety. Even *Mario Kart 64* and the similar *Diddy Kong Racing* offered four-player action on the same screen, so this is a big letdown.

It's not *F1 Racing Simulation* or an insanely realistic Papyrus game, but *SCARS* is solid — if slightly unpolished — racing fun. With a little extra effort, this could've been a something special — but once again, a case of console-itis has stricken another victim.

—Colin Williamson



Opposing vehicles go a-flyin' as a time-bomb goes off. These powerups are a blast to use in multi-player mode — just wait until the timer reaches two seconds, then hand it off to an enemy.



Just like every other racing game, *SCARS* features an ice-covered track that will have you slipping and sliding as you nuke your foes.



Aside from a bizarre plot and freakish vehicles, *SCARS* features lovely particle effects that will dazzle and delight, especially if you're a console fan.

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

68%

HIGHS: Nice visuals; no-holds-barred, screw-yer-buddy gameplay.

LOWS: Lackluster multi-player support; too many features are console throwbacks.

BOTTOM LINE: *SCARS* is entertaining, but it doesn't hold up against other PC racing games.

Enemy Infestation

CATEGORY: Real-time strategy **DEVELOPER:** Micro Forte **PUBLISHER:** Ripcord Games, (888) 797-5867, *www.ripcordgames.com* **REQUIRED:** Windows 95/98; 6x CD-ROM drive; Pentium 166; 32MB RAM; 22MB hard-drive space **WE RECOMMEND:** 12x CD-ROM drive; Pentium 233; 135MB hard-drive space **MULTI-PLAYER OPTIONS:** Serial: No; Modem: No; IPX: Yes; Spawnable: No; Free Internet play: HEAT, Mplayer; Maximum number of players: 4

The chance to battle aliens with strange weapons might temp *X-COM* fans, but an infestation of glitches drags this one down.

This *X-COM*-inspired real-time strategy game begins with a standard sci-fi motif — humans inside a deep-space base are besieged by overwhelming numbers of invading aliens — but developer Micro Forte has added a few twists to liven things up. Most unusual is that, with a couple of exceptions, you have no idea what effect your weapons will have on the invaders when you begin a mission; the ray gun that delivered a "weak kill" effect on the last mission might very well make an alien grow or even multiply on the current one — then make it shrink on the mission after that.

Some gamers might not groove on the uncertainty this setup brings, but I think it's a good touch that lends a realistic feel to the action — especially since it means your "weapons" can include everything from hairspray to fire extinguishers to soda canisters and TV remote controls. Each of the colonists has special abilities: chemists alter weapons to improve their lethality; doctors revive severely wounded personnel on the spot; biologists create viruses that can be used to infect the aliens; soldiers are better trained to use weapons and engage in hand-to-tentacle combat; and so on.



Robots can take significantly more damage than humans, and even if they are put out of commission, they can be repaired by a mechanic.

The odds are definitely against you in nearly every one of the game's 26 single-player missions; fortunately, you can bring downed crew members back to full health by dragging them to the Medical Lab.

The real challenge facing you, though, isn't the intruders' numerical superiority, or even finding the right strategies to use: it's dealing with a clumsy interface and the colonists' mediocre artificial intelligence. To beat back the alien threat, you'll need to pamper these guys like babies; if you place a colonist in "guard" mode (which you'll do frequently, so they won't move in close and take unnecessary damage when armed with ranged weapons like lasers and rocket launchers), then send him somewhere else, he won't stop until he reaches his destination — even if he comes under attack. Colonists won't grab a nearby weapon when attacked, and the only way to prevent them from using massive overkill (such as a rocket launcher on a baby alien) is to select them and issue the Hit command, something that can be tough to do when you need to issue different orders to different colonists in the frenzied heat of battle.

Try to enter a room or use an elevator, and you'll discover the colonists are so polite they'll enter one at a time, making them little more than alien fodder. For standard doorways, this convention is understandable, although their slowness is inexplicable; for elevators, it's downright silly. You can teach a colonist a new skill by having him carry a book, but that comes at the expense of carrying a weapon — even though the same person can carry a weapon and an injured comrade at the same time! Those must be some big-ass books.

The game also sports one of my biggest real-time strategy peeves: choosing grouped colonists by hitting the group's assigned number automatically centers the screen on that group. What's the point of being able to group units if all of them have to be in the center of the screen before you can send them somewhere else?

There are a few out-and-out oversights as well: there's no option to adjust game speed or change the difficulty level, and you can't keep the music permanently turned off — you have to do it every time you start a new mission or load a saved game!

This many miscues should completely torpedo a game, but I found *Enemy Infestation*'s story line, clichéd as it is, interesting enough to keep playing the single-player missions — a good thing, since the multi-player game strangely offers only a co-op mode. *Enemy Infestation* manages to rise above the average mark, but there's not much need to pick this one up unless you're a real-time strategy fanatic who wants to play everything in this crowded category.

— Stephen Poole



Controlling 14 colonists at one time can be tricky, but with enough practice, you can usually take control of any of them that are in danger before they bite the dust.



Get a gaggle of colonists packed into a tight space, and you'll discover how tricky it is to select exactly the one you want to control.

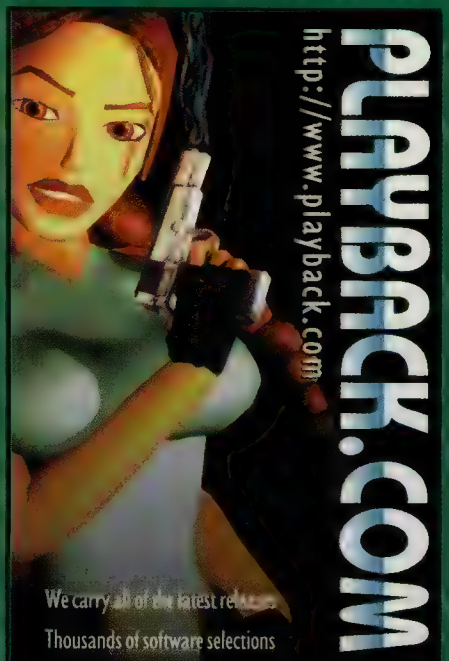
PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

52%

HIGHS: Good story line; interesting weapon effects.

LOWS: Numerous design issues make it difficult to play; hambone voice-acting; no settings for difficulty and game speed.

BOTTOM LINE: Worth playing if someone gave it to you as a gift — maybe.



PLAYBACK.COM

http://www.playback.com

We carry all of the latest releases

Thousands of software selections

Top-ranked in customer satisfaction

Inexpensive shipping

Overnight and International Deliveries available

Wholesale pricing available for dealers and resellers

Full line of Sony Playstation and Nintendo 64 games and accessories available.

Guaranteed Lowest Prices

TOLL FREE

1.800.370.1241

Over 500 Star Wars Items

Prototypes/ Unreleased Figures

Collectibles & Software

Rarities and Unusual Items

Pre-released Items

Episode I Figures



JediSource.com

collectib.es

http://www.jedisource.com

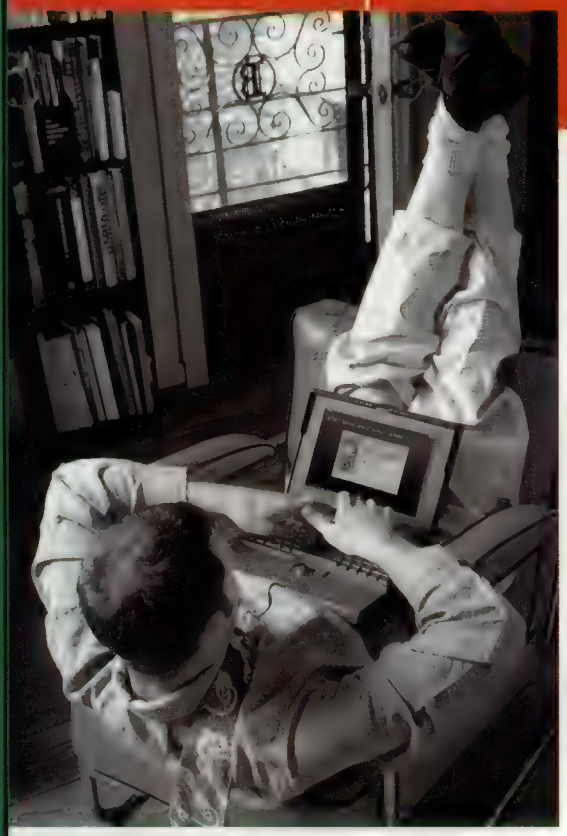
Welcome to the CyberLOUNGE

We know there are a ton of web sites out there and finding the hottest new sites you REALLY want can be hit or miss. Don't give up yet; your friends at PC Gamer *have done it again. Step into the* CyberLOUNGE*, put your feet up, and grab a nice cold one. Each month we'll tell you about the coolest, hippest web sites out there for you. This is a directory of sites aimed specifically at YOU, so you don't have to worry about wasting any more time.*



To place an ad in *Cyber*LOUNGE, call Melissa Marra at (415) 468-4684 x407 or e-mail her at *mmarra@pcgamer.com*. If you have comments or suggestions on what you would like to see in *Cyber*LOUNGE, e-mail us at *cyberlounge@pcgamer.com*.

Affordable conference calling has just dropped in your laptop.



Conference calling that **clicks.**

AT&T Click2Dial℠

With AT&T Click2Dial, anyone can set up a conference call. (That is, anyone with a computer and a phone. And isn't that just about everyone?)

Now you don't need an operator or special equipment to set up a conference call yourself. All you need is AT&T Click2Dial, your computer and a telephone to hold a business meeting or family reunion with up to six people. What's more, you're in total control. You can add, drop, mute and view anyone on the call. There's even an on-line phone directory. So how do you get this amazing, affordable, do-it-yourself conference call software? You can get it right now with your computer. Just go to **www.click2dial.att.com/getit** to download and for more details. Don't worry, it's absolutely free to download and there's no subscription fee. When a deal like this drops in your lap, it's an easy call to make.

Download FREE conference calling software

www.click2dial.att.com/getit

CyberLOUNGE

ATTENTION BASEBALL COMMISSIONERS!

Think Running Your League is Tough?

THINK AGAIN!

SportsLine COMMISSIONER

Have Fun – We'll Do the Work

- League Wizard has you up and running in 3 minutes
- Customized websites for every team owner
- Talk strategies in your own personalized league chat rooms

Experience the Power and Possibilities

- 100's of powerful features loaded with 1,000's of options
- Real-time scoring
- Customizable email reports
- Fantasy Rotisserie and Head-to-Head scoring systems supported
- Stats, scores and standings updated every morning

Support You Can Rely On

- Complete online help including manuals and site maps
- Money back guarantee of satisfaction
- Same day customer service from knowledgeable fantasy reps

FREE TRIAL!

Act now!
Get a FREE 30 day trial with SportsLine Commissioner

Run your entire league for only

$99.95!

GO TO:

sportsline.commissioner.com

Or Call Toll Free: 1-877-COMMISH
AOL Keyword: CBS SportsLine

CBS SportsLine SM

Internet access required for participation. Information subject to change without further notice. Not affiliated with Major League Baseball. CBS "eye device" is a registered trademark of CBS, Inc. SportsLine and SportsLine USA are service marks of SportsLine USA, Inc. Copyright © 1998 SportsLine USA, Inc. and Daedalus World Wide. All rights reserved. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

*If you're not completely satisfied, cancel your subscription within 60 days from the date of purchase for a complete refund.

CyberLOUNGE

WANT FAST, RELIABLE, AND INEXPENSIVE INTERNET SERVICE?



JUST $12.95 PER MONTH

T-THREE.COM DELIVERS.

DIAL-UP ACCOUNTS:

- Just $12.95 per month
- Unlimited NATIONWIDE access
- 2 FREE Email accounts
- 10MB of FREE web storage
- FREE roaming withing one Network
- FREE usenet news access
- NO long-term obligations

ISDN ACCOUNTS:

- Just $15.95 per month for a 1B 64k package
- Just $28.90 per month for a 2B 128k package
- Unlimited NATIONWIDE access
- 2 FREE Email accounts
- 10MB of FREE web storage
- FREE roaming withing one Network
- NO long-term obligations

GET INSTANT ACCESS ONLINE AT:
HTTP://WWW.T-THREE.COM
OR CALL TODAY AT: (800) 224-8525

"The Ultimate Gaming Machine"

"THE GREY"
"NEW" AMD K6-III 400MHz Processor w/3D NOW!
High-Performance Heatsink/Fan Cooling System
"Super Socket 7" Motherboard w/512K Cache
Crucial Technologies 128MB SDRAM (PC-100)
3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
10.1GB IBM Deskstar 14GXP (7200RPM)
3DFX Voodoo III w/16MB TV-Out 2X AGP
Sound Blaster LIVE! 3D Sound Card
Cambridge PC Works Speaker & Subwoofer System
50X CD-ROM Player
ATX Mid-Tower Case
104-Enhanced Keyboard
Microsoft Intellimouse PS/2
US Robotics V.90 56K Fax/Modem
Microsoft Windows '98 Operating System
Free installation & configuration
of favorite games & latest drivers

PRICE: $1,799.00

"THE HIVE-MIND"
Intel Pentium III 450MHz Processor SSE
High-Performance Heatsink/Dual-Fan Cooling System
Intel 440BX Motherboard w/5PCI Slots 512K Cache
Crucial 128MB SDRAM (PC-100)
3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
14.4GB IBM Deskstar 14GXP (7200RPM)
3DFX Voodoo III w/16MB TV-Out 2X AGP
Diamond Monster Sound MX300 3D Sound Card
Cambridge 4-Point Surround
Speaker & Subwoofer System
50X CD-ROM Player
ATX Full-Tower Case w/300 Watt PS
(KoolMaxx) Video Cooling System
104-Enhanced Keyboard
Microsoft Intellimouse PS/2
US Robotics V.90 56K Voice/Fax/Modem
Microsoft Sidewinder Precision Pro USB
Microsoft Windows '98 Operating System
Free installation & configuration
of favorite games & latest drivers

PRICE: $2,299.00

"THE AREA 51"
Intel Pentium III 500MHz Processor SSE
High-Performance Heatsink/Dual-Fan Cooling System
Intel 440BX Motherboard w/5PCI Slots 512K Cache
Crucial 256MB SDRAM (PC-100)
3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Drive
22.0GB IBM Deskstar 22GXP (7200 RPM)
Promise Ultra-66 IDE Controller (66MB per sec.)
3DFX Voodoo III w/16MB TV-Out 2X AGP
Sound Blaster LIVE! 3D Sound Card
Cambridge Desktop Theater 5.1 (Dolby-Digital)
Speaker & Subwoofer System
3rd Generation DVD-Player
Iomega Internal 100MB ZIP Drive
ATX Full-Tower Case w/300 Watt PS
(KoolMaxx) Video Cooling System
104-Enhanced Keyboard
Microsoft Intellimouse PS/2
US Robotics V.90 56K Voice/Fax/Modem
Microsoft Sidewinder ForceFeedback Pro
Microsoft Sidewinder Gamepad
Microsoft Windows '98 Operating System
Free installation & configuration
of favorite games & latest drivers

PRICE: $3,399.00

MONITORS

17" Viewsonic V73 .26dp add:	$315.00
17" Viewsonic G73 .26dp add:	$345.00
19" Viewsonic V95 .26dp add:	$495.00
19" Viewsonic PS790 .25dp add:	$565.00
21" Viewsonic P810 .25dp add:	$1,010.00
21" Nokia 445X Pro .21dp add:	$1,265.00

Build your own customized high-performance gaming machine at: www.alienware-pc.com

All major credit cards accepted.

Toll Free: (800) 494-3382

www.alienware-pc.com

13398 Southwest 128th Street Miami, Florida 33186

ALIENWARE

Products named in this publication are trademarks of their respective companies. All prices and specifications are subject to change without notice or obligation. Cases shown may not be applicable to certain models. Not responsible for typographical errors. Shipping and handling and any applicable taxes are not included & not refundable.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #091

"Bottom Line: If you've got the money to spend, this is the gaming system to own"
-PC Gamer, January 1998

"PERFORMANCE WAS SIMPLY STUNNINIG"
-Computer Gaming World, July 1998

"FAST, PACKED, AND STACKED"
-BOOT Magazine, July 1998



Your local computer sales person tells you that you should purchase multiple modems for setting up a gaming network in your home — what are you going to suggest he read in the future? How about...

The Hard Stuff

If you follow the computer industry closely, it probably hasn't escaped your notice that Apple has finally decided it wants a piece of the computer gaming industry (it's a little late, but there was room for Microsoft on the bandwagon a few years ago, so there may be room for Apple, too).

Apple went so far as to send us one of its new G3 towers to evaluate as a game machine. Our first reaction was disdain, of course — after all, we're *PC Gamer*, not *G3 Gamer* — but it turns out that Apple's newest computer isn't too shabby. It's a lot more expensive than a comparable PC, but it sure is pretty and nicely designed — and it's got plenty of power and a decent 3D accelerator. We're not about to trade in our Pentium II PCs for Apple's newest machine, but playing with the G3 was interesting and enlightening. Turn the page for the whole story.

You'll also find the usual assortment of Hard Stuff goodies, including reviews of MadCatz's excellent Andretti Racing Wheel, a complete PII 450MHz computer system from PC4PLAY, a new set of speakers from Kinyo, an awesome DVD-ROM kit from Hi-Val, as well as the latest in the current trickle of USB-compatible controllers.

How We Rate The Hard Stuff

You've been around long enough to know the greatest technology doesn't mean a thing unless it improves the games you love to play. Our reviews focus on real-world testing, but when a number is in order for comparisons, we use the benchmarking tools developed by our hardware-frenzied sister publication *Maximum PC*. Between our testing and the BenchMarks, we'll give you the lowdown on which devices perform and which ones fizzle.

PC Gamer Editors' Choice Awards

Every month, we honor the best peripherals, utilities, and hardware we test with our Editors' Choice award. So when you see the *PCG* Editors' Choice logo on hardware at a local computer store, you can be sure it's among the best.

Table of Contents

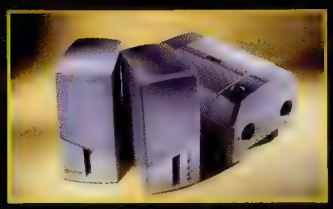
News, Previews, Trends

Apple takes on Gaming: Will *PC Gamer* become *G3 Gamer*? 144

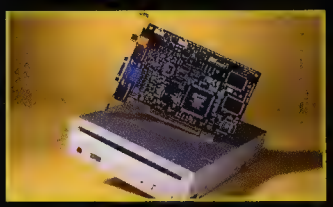
Reviews



PC4PLAY PII 450MHz *system* 148



SW-1271 Speaker System 152



Hi-Val HDVD-6 Kit 149



MaxFire G-07 *controller* 153

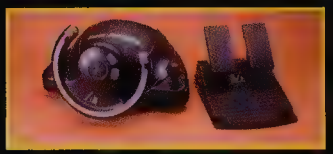


Top Shot USB Joystick 152



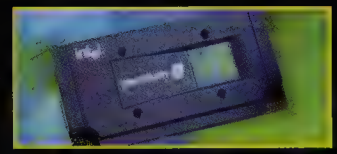
Andretti Racing Wheel 153

The Hard Stuff Sideways Page



Hear ye, hear ye! *Find the controller for you right here on our funny-looking page* 155

Tech Q&A



How fast are those crazy Intel boys planning on making the Pentium III? *Check Q&A!* 155

Apple takes on Gaming: Will PC Gamer become G3 Gamer?

■ Apple's getting serious about games with its new G3 line, but can gamers take the G3 seriously?

At the last Macworld Expo, representatives from Apple billed the new Macintosh G3 computer as a viable gaming platform. Under normal circumstances, any such claim would likely go unnoticed by *PC Gamer* — our devotion to PCs means we're especially annoyed by Mac-lovers' insistence that their favorite machines are a match for ours — but this time the situation was a bit different.

Steve Jobs, one of the founders of Apple, is back on the bridge of the company, and all this gaming talk is coming from him. Jobs is back at Apple because a lot of people think he can revitalize the company — and the success of the iMac suggests he can. If anyone can convince the industry and the public that the Macintosh is a viable gaming platform, it's him.

But what was this mythical G3 Jobs kept touting at the Expo? Was it the same old Mac dressed up in a futuristic case, or a bona fide gaming powerhouse? Apple was kind enough to send us a 400MHz G3 so we could find out for ourselves.



Looking very much like the back of a PC, the G3 differs in that its inputs are clearly labeled.

Upon the G3's arrival, many editors in the office were a bit taken aback by the shape and design of its mid-tower case. It was so different from the beige boxes we were accustomed to — was it a computer, or some kind of toy? Any prejudice faded, though, when we saw how functional and downright elegant the case's design truly is.



20 years in the future, PC manufacturers have finally realized how to make a good case. Oh wait, we're not in the future — this is a new G3.

All that's required to open the oddly attractive case is a pull of the handle set into the side of the tower; the entire right-hand side of the case hinges downward to provide amazingly easy access to the motherboard, which is mounted directly on it. We're used to coming away with skinned fingers and stripped screwdrivers after an upgrade session with some of the PCs we work with, so we can only hope some PC case manufacturer will adopt a similar design.

With the case open, we found a motherboard whose layout would look eerily familiar to anyone who knows the insides of a PC. Even the memory slots, a hassle to get at in previous Macintosh systems, are within easy reach. And, as with your average PC, the motherboard is home to three PCI slots — two of them free, since the SCSI adapter is seated in one of them. In addition to the three industry-standard PCI slots, there's also a fourth slot that looks a little like an AGP slot, but it's really only a 66MHz PCI slot (roughly equivalent to an AGP 1x slot) dedicated to the system's ATI Rage 128 graphics accelerator.

The one piece of hardware we expected to see in this new G3 — especially after all the fuss was made because of its absence in the hugely popular iMac — was a floppy drive. Unfortunately, it's still MIA. There's no Zip drive, either, or any other form of removable storage. Of course, you can purchase a floppy or Zip separately, but why should you have to go so far out of your way? In a system so obviously positioned as the best Apple has to offer, this lack of removable storage is puzzling.

Another unfortunate carryover from the iMac is the design of the G3's mouse. For a PC user, getting used to the Macintosh's single-button mouse is hard enough, but the undersized, form-over-content hockey puck that comes with the G3 is nearly impossible to come to grips with. In fact, third-party companies are already making plastic attachments that snap onto the circular mouse to make it look and feel more like a standard mouse. Just to make sure we PC-centered gamers weren't being overly critical, we handed the G3 over to *PC Gamer*'s art staff (they spend about 50 hours a week on Macs) and asked their opinions. The results were the same: the mouse is unacceptable for gaming or professional use. In fact, the art team found it so awkward to do detailed work in *PhotoShop* on the G3 that they replaced its mouse with a more traditional third-party mouse and left the



With the experienced gained from the launch of the iMac, Apple has learned that appearance plays a big role in the minds of many would-be buyers. In the tradition of the iMac, the G3's case looks like something out of a science fiction movie. Love it or hate it, the case makes an impression.

hockey puck to gather dust.

Once they got past the lack of a Zip or floppy drive and the poorly designed mouse, our in-house Mac mavens found they were very impressed with the power of the system overall. The new G3 is certainly the fastest Macintosh they've ever used or seen.

But let's get to the big question: How does this new G3 stand up as a gaming machine? That answer lies much more in game developers' hands than in Apple's; the G3 is a powerful machine, but it's not going to be a good gaming platform unless developers begin taking it seriously and provide software for it. G3 versions of *Half-Life*, *Baldur's Gate*, etc., could run very well — but at press time there were no such animals. We played the few Mac games we could lay our hands on, though — id Software's *Quake*, Reality Bytes' *Dark Vengeance*, Epic's *Unreal*, and Bungie's *Myth II*.

System Specs

SYSTEM
Processor: 400MHz PowerPC G3
RAM: 128MB PC100 SDRAM
Cache: 1MB level 2

STORAGE
Hard Drive: 9GB Ultra2 SCSI
CD-ROM: 24x-max

INTERFACES
Two 400-Mbps FireWire ports
Two 12Mbps USB ports
Apple ADB port
Built-in 10/100Base-T Ethernet Connector
Four PCI slots: three 33MHz slots (two free) and one 66MHz slot (ocupied by Rage 128)

VIDEO
Video card: ATI Rage 128
Monitor: 17" Apple CRT

AUDIO
Speaker System: Integrated (allows for external speakers)

OTHER
Apple USB Keyboard and Apple USB Mouse

In every case, frame rates were quite good — very much in the same ballpark as what you'd expect from a 400MHz Pentium II with a good 3D accelerator (with *Quake*, for example, the G3 turned in 65.7 frames per second at 640x480 resolution; our 400MHz Pentium II with a Voodoo2 card gave us 67.7fps). We did see a problem, however, with the graphics; while 3D graphics were beautiful in 32-bit color (some of the best true-color rendering we've seen), image quality takes a dive in 16-bit color games.

At the heart of this issue is the ATI Rage 128 that Apple chose as the G3's 2D/3D accelerator. There's no doubt that it is a capable design; the PC version we've been testing leads us to believe that it's roughly on par with a RIVA TNT in terms of raw power. But the card seems to have serious problems with games that use 16-bit color, like *Quake* and *Myth II*. In those games, we saw one of the worst dithering problems we've ever seen; it looked like the kind of "snow" you see on a television when the signal isn't quite tuned in. At high resolutions, the problem wasn't nearly as evident, but at resolutions of 800x600 or below, the distortion was very distracting.

ATI says it's aware of this problem and has gone a long way toward correcting it with updated drivers — but only on the PC, so far. It's hard to believe no one noticed this problem before the G3 shipped, and there's no telling when G3 users will get a fix for it.

There's also the major issue of cost. The 400MHz G3 we looked at costs $2,999 *without* a monitor, external speakers, or a joystick or gamepad. For that kind of dough, you could get a 450MHz Pentium II system with all the trimmings — including a nice monitor — and you'll have a lot more games to choose from.

With its powerful processor and a 3D accelerator as standard equipment, the G3 is certainly a move in the right direction. But until — and unless — the G3's price comes down and the selection of games available for it approaches that of the PC, we can't recommend it as a gaming machine.



The object above is a PDA, a desktop satellite dish, or a new flat panel speaker?

It's the world's first flat panel multimedia speaker.

You have to hear them to believe them.

Instead of a cone, a .25mm flat panel vibrates, projecting sound 360°.

It's the greatest advance in audio since the invention of the speaker itself.

For computers, home and portable stereos, stereo TVs and cd players.

Call 1-888-9BENWIN to order, or visit our on-line store at www.benwin.com



The BW2000 speaker system, with two flat panel speakers and a subwoofer, retail priced at $99. Full money back guarantee*.

BENWIN®
The new shape of sound™

The future of audio is available now from Benwin, the new leader in flat panel speaker technology.

1-888-9BENWIN
www.benwin.com
626-935-8888

*Less shipping and handling.
© 1999 Kwong Quest, LLC. All rights reserved. Based on NXT technology, NXT is a trademark of New Transducers Limited. PCGAMER3.99

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #365



Remember, if you get the wind knocked out of you,
stay down so I can examine the color of your face.



Guess you could say we like to go out of our way to make sure stuff looks real.
Why? Because we can. Our 3D graphics accelerator performs over 100 billion operations a second.
And considering our chip is compatible with a ton of games and software, maybe it's time to upgrade
your present computer with a 3dfx Voodoo3™ board, or make sure it's built into your next one.
For more information, check out our website at www.3dfx.com. **So powerful, it's kind of ridiculous.**

3dfx™

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #762

PC4PLAY

PC4PLAY PII 450MHz

COMPANY: PC4PLAY, *www.pc4play.com* **PHONE:** (800) 724-7529 *(to order)* **PRICE:** $4,425 (as reviewed)

The company with the silly name skips the formalities and goes straight to work on the high-end PC market.

If anything, the 450MHz PC4PLAY system reviewed here puts the old adage to the test: Is it really possible to have too much of a good thing? For many gamers — hardcore or not — it just might be. And while PC4PLAY offers many different configuration possibilities, our job is to review the system that was sent; and this system goes a bit overboard with the bells and whistles, resulting in a prohibitive price tag.

The first instance of overkill that caught our eyes was the presence, directly under the very capable Plextor 40x CD-ROM drive, of a Creative DVD-RAM drive.

Unfortunately, there are currently two competing types of rewritable DVD-ROM drives: DVD-RAM, which is certified by the DVD Forum, and DVD+RW, which is arguably a better format but isn't certified.

The presence of the DVD-RAM drive in this PC4PLAY system is problematic for several reasons: It's an expensive option; the 2.6GB of data that it can write and re-write per DVD side can only currently be read by other DVD-RAM drives (although future DVD-ROM drives should be able to read them); and there's no guarantee that DVD-RAM will be the victor in the battle of rewritable DVD formats. Its usefulness to gamers is questionable at best; it'd make more sense to us to simply put a fast DVD-ROM drive in place of the DVD-RAM and the CD-ROM drive.

While the usefulness of a DVD-RAM drive is up for debate, there's no denying how handy a more practical form of removable storage can be; a standard 1.44MB floppy drive just doesn't cut it when some games' save files can run to multiple megabytes by themselves. But even here, the PC4PLAY system goes overboard, including both a 100MB Iomega Zip drive and an LS-120, a drive that can use either 1.44MB floppies or 120MB "super floppies." Either solution is fine, but why have both? The 100MB Zip format is much more widely used today than the LS-120, so we'd go with a Zip and a standard floppy drive.

Internally, the PC4PLAY has a lot for a gamer to like. It comes with a Quantum Obsidian X-24 24MB Voodoo2 card (the equivalent of two Voodoo2s in SLI mode) and a 16MB Canopus RIVA TNT card in the AGP slot — that's a combo we can sink our teeth into. We generally prefer the TNT's image quality in most cases to that of the Voodoo2, but there are plenty of times when the X-24 can crank out more frames per second — and it provides compatibility with those 3Dfx-only games that are still showing up on the shelves.



There's a lot of exciting technology housed in this system, but does the average gamer need it all?

Rounding out the video end of this system is Creative Labs' DXR2 card, which decodes DVD movies. It's good, but its image quality doesn't match Sigma Designs' REALmagic Hollywood Plus decoder (see our review of the Hi-Val HDVD-6 Kit in this issue for a look at this excellent card). Still, the presence of the DXR2 is to be expected in a system that includes a Creative Labs DVD-RAM drive.

For sound, the PC4PLAY packs the winning combination of a Creative Labs Sound Blaster Live! Value and the Cambridge SoundWorks FourPointSurround speaker system. No redundancy here.

The computer itself benchmarked very well — as would be expected from a SCSI-based PII 450MHz system built around an Asus P2B-LS motherboard (helped in no small measure by the excellent choice of video cards under the hood).

Unfortunately, because we have to concern ourselves with price and practicality, we can't recommend this particular PC4PLAY system to gamers — not when unnecessary or redundant components (DVD-RAM, LS-120 drive, USB hub — even the SCSI interface isn't a big necessity for gamers) add to the $4,000 pricetag. Still, PC4PLAY's systems are clearly well designed, the warranty is good, and they can be custom configured to suit your needs — so it's worth checking out the company when shopping around for your next system.

BenchMarks

3D Mark
(TESTS DIRECT3D PERFORMANCE)
3710 3D Marks

16-bit color:
Game 1 Race: 56.1 fps
Game 2 First Person: 54.7 fps

Shogo
(TESTS DIRECT3D PERFORMANCE)
640x480 – 43.4 fps
800x600 – 36.2 fps
1024x768 – 25.1 fps

Forsaken
(TESTS DIRECT3D PERFORMANCE)
640x480 – 119.85 fps
800x600 – 119.72 fps
1024x768 – 74.8 fps

Quake II
(TESTS OPENGL PERFORMANCE)
640x480 – 90.1 fps
800x600 – 77.2 fps
1024x768 – 57.9 fps

Quake
(TESTS DOS PERFORMANCE)
320x200 – 112.4 fps
640x480 – 52.4 fps

System Specs

SYSTEM
Processor: Intel Pentium II 450MHz
RAM: 256MB SDRAM
Cache: 512K

STORAGE
Hard Drive: 18.2GB Cheetah Ultra2 SCSI
DVD-ROM: Creative Labs DVD-RAM drive

EXPANSION
RAM: 4 DIMM slots (2 free)

VIDEO
Base: 16MB Canopus 2500 (AGP 2X)
DVD Decoder Card: Creative Labs Dxr2

AUDIO
Sound Card: SoundBlaster Live! Value
Speaker System: Cambridge SoundWorks FourPoint Surround

INPUT
Keyboard: Microsoft Natural Keyboard
Mouse: Microsoft USB Intellimouse
Gamepad: Microsoft FreeStyle Pro
Steering Wheel: Microsoft Force Feedback

OTHER
Modem: Internal Diamond Supra V.90 56K
Four-port USB hub

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Excellent 3D acceleration combo; terrific sound system; well-designed case.

LOWS: High price tag on review unit, due largely to the inclusion of some components the average power-gamer doesn't need.

BOTTOM LINE: It's difficult to recommend this system as configured, but as a vendor, PC4PLAY is worth a look.

HI-VAL, INC.

Hi-Val HDVD-6 Kit

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

COMPANY: Hi-Val, Inc., *www.hival.com* **PHONE:** (714) 953-3000 **PRICE:** $269.99 (Direct)

Hi-Val shows a talent for picking quality products and top manufacturers with its newest DVD-ROM kit.

Okay, there aren't tons of DVD-based PC games out there, just waiting for you to upgrade to a DVD-ROM drive. In fact, if games were the only reason to move to DVD, we couldn't recommend the upgrade at all. But movies are fun, too, aren't they? Sure they are, and our careful research shows that movies are precisely 27.35 percent more fun on DVD.

Now, you can watch a DVD movie with any old DVD-ROM drive and some MPEG-2 decoding software, but the way to really enjoy your favorite flicks on DVD is with a hardware decoder card — which gives you a better picture *and* lets you send a DVD movie's audio and video output to your home theater receiver and big-screen TV. DVD-ROM drives and hardware decoders are being bundled in upgrade kits at a wide range of prices — so which kit do you buy?

As we go to press, that question has a simple answer: you want the kit that pairs the best DVD-ROM drive we've seen (the Pioneer DVD-103, with 6x DVD-ROM speed and 32x CD-ROM speed) with the best hardware decoder card (Sigma Designs' REALMagic Hollywood Plus). Specifically, you want Hi-Val's new HDVD-6 Kit.

What's so special about the components that make up this kit? For starters, Pioneer's DVD-ROM drive actually scored higher than its rated specs, coming in as a 6.2x (max) DVD-ROM drive, and 33.1x (max) CD-ROM drive in the benchmark tests we ran with DVD-ROM and CD-ROM Tach98, respectively. That's something we don't see every day. (As a side note: we first thought we were going to have to give this kit a less-than-stellar review when we initially tested it — despite the good numbers it was turning out for our downstairs neighbors and lab-buddies at *Maximum PC*. As it turns out, the BIOS version our motherboard was using was slightly outdated and was keeping the DVD-103 from reaching its peak performance. Once we'd upgraded the BIOS with the newest revision, we got the numbers we were expecting. Let that be a lesson, power gamers: when you're surfing the 'net in search of the latest drivers for your video and sound cards, make sure your motherboard's got the latest software, too!)



This is the best DVD-ROM kit currently available for watching your favorite DVD movies.

No DVD-ROM kit is complete without a good hardware decoder card. By choosing the REALmagic Hollywood Plus, Hi-Val has created the ultimate PC movie viewing experience, whether you watch DVD flicks on your monitor or send the output to your TV. Of all the decoders we've seen, none beats the REALmagic for picture quality. The one problem we ran into is that, for some reason, you can't display a movie on your TV and monitor at the same time; this can present problems when trying to use the card's helpful and intuitive on-screen options.



Because of the way the Hollywood Plus is designed, taking a screen shot of it playing a movie was impossible. Just take our word for it — Wesley Snipes has never looked better.

The Hollywood Plus uses a standard external pass-through cable (similar to those used by add-on 3D accelerators like the 3Dfx Voodoo2), so it should work with any video card you may have in your PC. In fact, on our test rig, we ran the output from our video card through a Voodoo2 accelerator *and* the Hollywood Plus, and didn't notice any significant image degradation (something we've run into with other hardware decoders, like Creative Labs' DXR2 card). Even at resolutions as high as 1280x1024, the picture was sharp. As for sound quality, the decoder provides analog audio output for your standard stereo receiver and a digital output for newer, 5.1-channel Dolby Digital receivers.

The price is right, too. If you're at all interested in getting into DVD movies — and being ready when games inevitably do start showing up in DVD-ROM format — you'll find it hard to do better than this Hi-Val kit.

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Fastest, most reliable DVD-ROM drive we've found; best-looking output of any DVD/MPEG-2 decoder card we've seen; easy to install; relatively low system requirements.

LOWS: You can't display a movie on your monitor and TV at the same time.

BOTTOM LINE: If you've been waiting to upgrade to DVD, the Hi-Val HDVD-6 is the way to go.

LET FREEDOM REIGN

Follow in the footsteps of Scottish hero, William Wallace, as you unite clans, overcome the might of the English army and guarantee freedom for all future generations of Scots.

Based on the award-winning motion picture starring Mel Gibson, Braveheart combines a free-flow, real-time strategy engine with an expansive global management system.

In this historically accurate epic, there are no consolation prizes in the battle for freedom.

- Allows individual control of on-screen warriors going far beyond the traditional limits of unit management.
- Historically accurate 3D battlefields, using satellite data to 50 square meters, tests tactical and strategic skills.
- Seamlessly combines real-time gameplay within a turn-based, build an empire world.
- Choose among 16 historically accurate clans in your battle to restore freedom to Scotland.
- Multiplayer scenarios for up to 8 players on LAN or internet in both co-op or competitive modes.

EIDOS
INTERACTIVE

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

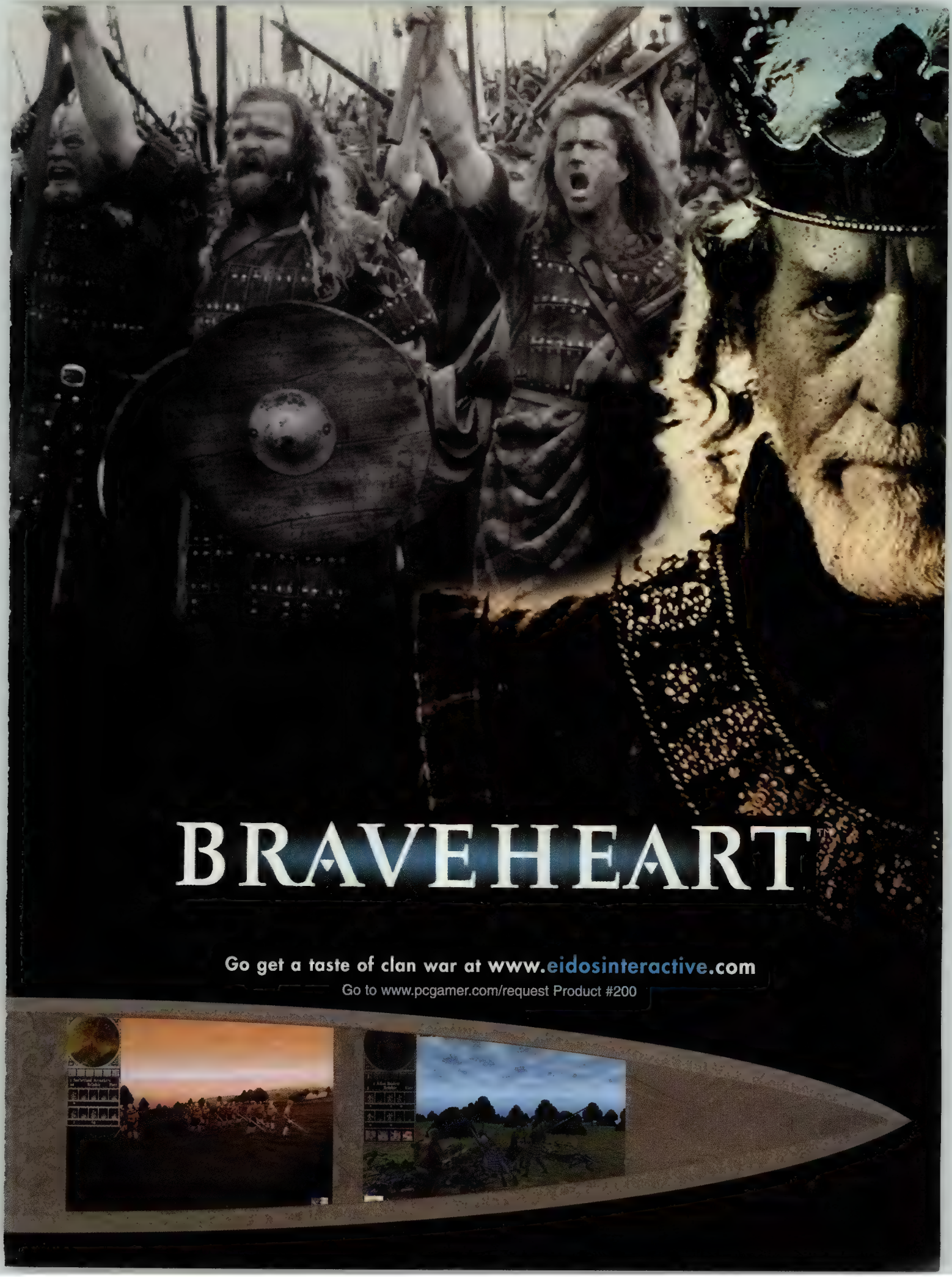
EIDOSGAMES ON FREE INTERNET PLAY

red lemon
red lemon studios | it's a game thing!








BRAVEHEART™
Go get a taste of clan war at www.eidosinteractive.com
Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #200

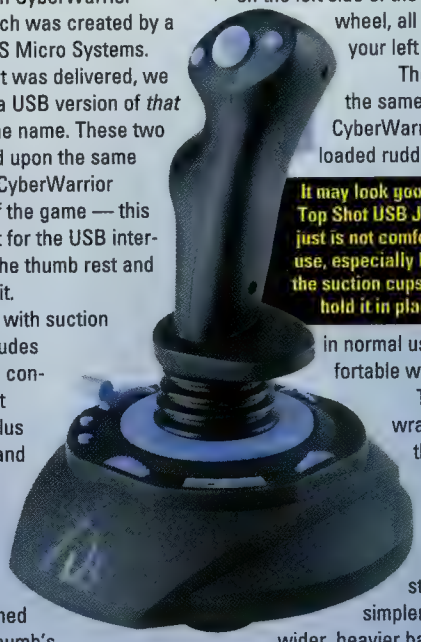
AVB

Top Shot USB Joystick

COMPANY: AVB, *www.avbtech.com* **PHONE:** (562) 903-7002 *(tech support)* **PRICE:** $49.98 *(m.s.r.p.)*

In the May issue of *PC Gamer*, we ran a review of the Cytech CyberWarrior Digital joystick, which was created by a company called CCS Micro Systems. When the AVB Top Shot was delivered, we thought we'd received a USB version of *that* stick — until we saw the name. These two joysticks *must* be based upon the same design. If you read the CyberWarrior review, you're ahead of the game — this stick is identical except for the USB interface and the shape of the thumb rest and the button mounted on it.

Held to your desk with suction cups, the Top Shot includes eight buttons, a throttle control, a four-direction hat switch, and a rudder, plus trim controls for the X and Y axes. Of the controls mounted on the stick itself, three buttons and the POV hat are well placed, but a fourth button is positioned just outside a normal thumb's range of motion. The other four buttons are on the left side of the base near the throttle wheel, all easily accessible to your left hand.



It may look good, but the Top Shot USB Joystick just is not comfortable to use, especially because the suction cups fail to hold it in place.

The Top Shot suffers from the same design problem the CyberWarrior did: the spring-loaded rudder wheel is located directly behind the stick, where it falls below your right wrist in normal use. There's just no comfortable way to use it.

The base of the stick is wrapped in a rubber collar that makes the spring tension feel spongy and imprecise. The suction cups don't help, offering little in the way of stability compared to the simpler, better solution — a wider, heavier base.

The CyberWarrior included a handy, if counterintuitive, programming interface. Lacking that, the Top Shot can only be "programmed" if a given game lets you customize its control setup, and that isn't always an option.

We were pleased by the CyberWarrior because, even with its quirks, it had every feature you'd expect in a high-end joystick at a much friendlier price. Times have changed, though; there are more joysticks available now, and prices are getting lower. This design doesn't cut it anymore, be it on the CyberWarrior, the Top Shot, or any other rush-to-market joystick. Spend your money elsewhere.

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Decent grip; most of the buttons are well placed; looks pretty cool.

LOWS: Mushy feel; lousy stability because of the suction cups; bad rudder placement; no programming interface.

BOTTOM LINE: Haven't I seen you somewhere before? The Top Shot is based on a familiar design that hasn't withstood the test of time.

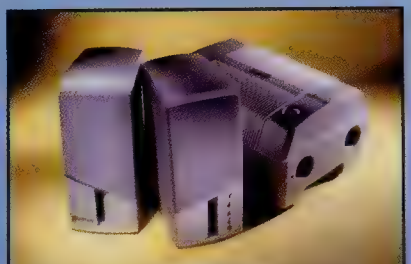
KINYO

SW-1271 Speaker System

COMPANY: Kinyo, *www.kinyo.com* **PHONE:** (800) 735-4696 *(customer service)* **PRICE:** $199.99 *(m.s.r.p.)*

The first thing you'll notice about this new, three-piece speaker system is its size. The satellites ain't no little powercubes; they're big, each housing a 4" midrange cone and a 1.5" tweeter. At 10" high and 7" deep, they'll probably force a minor rearrangement of your desktop to make room for them. The wide, plastic subwoofer is proportionally large, but you can set it on the floor out of harm's way.

The payoff for making room for these big puppies is equally big sound. Each satellite cranks out 15 watts RMS, which is more than most computer users will ever need. The subwoofer thumps out clean, solid bass at 40 watts RMS. This system could easily serve up enough noise in your living room for a Super Bowl party.



This oversized system from Kinyo creates decent sound with power to spare — but you can do better for the price.

The right-hand speaker houses the controls, allowing you to tweak the bass, treble and volume. Kinyo also thoughtfully includes a headphone jack, so you can play all night without keeping the rest of your family awake (or listen to your John Denver CDs without putting anyone to sleep).

The sound is clear enough, but the midrange is overpowered by treble — even with the treble knob turned all the way down. One of our test machines is equipped with a Monster Sound MX300, whose software includes a 10-band graphical equalizer; after a few minutes of tweaking, we achieved damn near perfect audio. On the other hand, if your sound card *doesn't* let you adjust frequency response the way the MX300 does, you may be disappointed.

A worse problem may be present in the speakers' construction; our testing gave us reason to wonder about the system's longevity. Within the first two days of testing, the tweeter in the left speaker developed an annoying crackle. We cut the treble a bit, chalked it up to a fluke, and continued on. Days later, though, the right-hand tweeter began crackling, too. It's important to note that we never overdrove the speakers; in fact, we didn't crank the volume up anywhere *near* the distortion level.

If the speakers could handle the load, we would've been happy to recommend the SW-1271 as a decent buy. The price is right for the power this system is capable of — but it's way too steep if you can't rely on the drivers to handle that power.

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: High power and awesome bass.

LOWS: Treble-heavy; satellite speakers take up a lot of valuable desk space and the large subwoofer will get in the way on the floor; durability is questionable.

BOTTOM LINE: While we appreciate the system's power and big sound, there are better systems out there for the price.

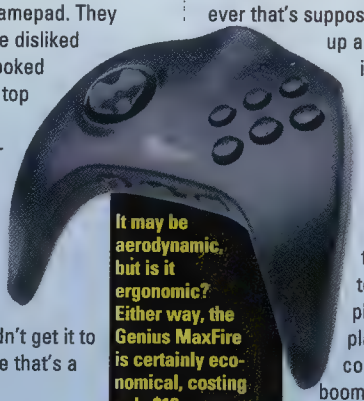
GENIUS

MaxFire G-07

COMPANY: Genius, *www.genius-kye.com* **PHONE:** (800) 456-7593 (626) 369-0427 *(tech support)* **PRICE:** $10 (estimated street price)

1. Turn off your computer. 2. Plug the pad connector (15-pin) into your computer's game port. 3. Turn your computer on and start your favorite game software."

Those are the instructions for installing the Genius MaxFire G-07 gamepad. They were the second reason we disliked this gamepad before we hooked it up. The first one was the top line of the box copy, which boasted of the pad's "aerodynamic boomerang shape." Correct us if we're wrong, but that's not a terribly important trait in a gamepad — besides, no matter many times we threw it, we couldn't get it to come back (although maybe that's a good thing).



It may be aerodynamic, but is it ergonomic? Either way, the Genius MaxFire is certainly economical, costing only $10.

As the manual's simple description implies, the MaxFire didn't come with DirectInput drivers for Windows 95/98 — a shame, since the gamepad simply doesn't work without them. We found a pre-release version of the drivers on the company's web site, though. The MaxFire is adorned with six thumb buttons, two triggers, and an eight-way directional pad — not bad for ten bucks. The manual indicates that the triggers are "reserved for future game software"; whatever that's supposed to mean, they showed up as buttons seven and eight in Win 98's game controller setup applet (once we installed the drivers we'd downloaded).

The MaxFire is surprisingly sturdy, considering its price. The directional pad and thumb buttons are all in the right places, but the triggers are placed a bit too far back for comfort. The aerodynamic, boomerang-like handles are not bad, either, but they taper off too sharply to be comfortable for long play sessions. The commonly seen, seldom used "rapid fire" function is present, named Turbo here — but that's the only frill you'll find in this package. This isn't a multi-player controller that lets you hook up two or more to the same machine, like those from Gravis or Microsoft, and there's nothing in the way of programmability.

Still, after whacking around arcade games like *NFL Blitz, Jazz Jackrabbit 2,* and such, it's hard to knock this little gamepad. Despite a bad manual and the need to download drivers (at least for the review unit), it's not bad for the estimated $10 street price. If you've got the cash to drop on a Microsoft SideWinder Gamepad, it's the better controller — but if you're desperately strapped and want a no-frills gamepad now, it's a decent bargain.

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Fairly well built for such a low-priced controller; $10 is cheap!

LOWS: Had to download drivers needed to make it work; handles and thumb buttons aren't comfortable; no programmability.

BOTTOM LINE: It's cheap — but you might be better off saving that ten-spot and putting it toward a nicer gamepad.

MAD CATZ

Andretti Racing Wheel

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

COMPANY: Mad Catz, *www.madcatz.com* **PHONE:** (800) 659-2287 *(tech support)* **PRICE:** $79 *(m.s.r.p.)*

Some hardware companies' representatives take it very seriously when we write bad reviews of their products. They make nasty phone calls to our publisher; they pull all of their ads; they circulate harshly worded press releases about how stupid we are; etc. It's as if they think we *enjoy* putting down their hard work, as if we're sitting here cackling "Let's put them out of business! Bwah ha ha ha!"

Mad Catz is *not* such a company. It represent the other reaction to bad reviews: take the criticism for what it is, regroup, and build a better product. More than two years ago, we reviewed the worst racing wheel ever to enter our offices at the time, which was the Mad Catz Analog Steering Wheel.

The new Andretti shows that the fine folks at Mad Catz have learned from their mistakes — and then some.

This is one of the finest non-force-feedback wheels we've ever tested. Borrowing concepts (and some design cues) from the Thrustmaster NASCAR Pro, this wheel improves on that Editors' Choice-rated product. The grip is covered entirely in rubber and very



With its fine grip and perfect tension, the Andretti Wheel is on track to become a classic.

comfortable; the pedals are weighted for stability, and they move naturally; and the buttons are all in the right places.

Two of them are on the back of the wheel to emulate gear-shift paddles; we prefer the butterfly-style shifters on wheels like ACT Labs' Force RS, but these'll do. Another two are within comfortable reach of your right thumb, and the last two are the forward and backward positions of a shift lever mounted on the right-hand side of the compact base. A four-way hat switch sits near your left thumb. The base is secured firmly with the same kind of quick-release clamps that Thrustmaster uses.

The wheel, its tension, its motion, and the pedals all work together to hit the sweet spot of racing control. What's more, the wheel just feels sturdy and reliable. It's no wonder Mario and sons chose this product to lend their name to.

We couldn't have predicted this two years ago, but Mad Catz has been building some fine products lately. The Andretti wheel is the company's best effort to date, and if its products keep getting better the company is going to become a force for Thrustmaster, CH Products, and Microsoft to reckon with. This wheel can't lay claim to the powerful buzzword that is force feedback, but some PC racers aren't interested; they'll find everything they need in the Mad Catz Andretti Wheel.

PC GAMER FINAL VERDICT

HIGHS: Excellent grip and tension; comfortable button placement; convenient clamping system and secure base; ergonomic, stable pedals; wheel feels sturdy and reliable.

LOWS: Better trigger buttons would be nice.

BOTTOM LINE: The Andretti Racing Wheel is a top-notch PC driving system. This is one of the best products from Mad Catz we've seen.

STRIKE HARD
GET PAID

F16 AGGRESSOR

F-16 AGGRESSOR

is the closest anyone outside the military will get to experiencing flight in the cockpit of an F-16 Falcon. No other combat flight sim comes close to the real Falcon's sophisticated fly-by-wire system.

- World class technology featuring a flight model so realistic military-only secret features had to be removed
- Fly over 40 geo-political missions over destabilized regions of Africa
- Beautifully accurate landscapes from Madagascar, The Rift Valley, Morocco, and Ethiopia
- Powerful AI controls tanks, planes, helicopters, ships, trucks and other vehicles with stunning realism
- Engage opponents in simultaneous air combat in target-rich environments over the Internet or LAN











BETHESDA SOFTWORKS • 1370 Piccard Drive, Suite 120, Rockville, MD 20850 • Fax: 301 926-8010 • www.bethsoft.com

F-16 Aggressor Copyright ©1998 GSI Limited. All Rights Reserved. Distributed under license from Virgin Interactive Entertainment (Europe) Limited.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #042

The Hard Stuff Sideways Page

WE REVIEW SO MUCH HARD STUFF EVERY MONTH, it can be hard to keep track of what's hot and what's not. On this page, we dare to compare hardware we've reviewed in the past year. In fact, there's so much data, we had to turn the page sideways to make it all fit! This month: Controllers!

CONTROLLER	DATE REVIEWED	PRICE AS REVIEWED*	NUMBER OF BUTTONS	PROGRAMMING	AMBIDEXTROUS?	WORKS IN DOS MODE?	FUNCTION	COMMON FEATURES	COMMENTS
InterAct V3 Racing Wheel	August '98	$59.99	8	Hardware	Yes	Yes	Racing	TH	It controls like the inexpensive piece of plastic that it is.
Suncom SFX Plus	September '98	$49	20	Hardware	No	Yes	General Purpose	—	Stick to the original SFX — if you can find one, that is.
Microsoft SideWinder Freestyle Pro	October '98	$74.99	10	Software	No	No	General Purpose	TH	Great for motorcycle games, but check it out before buying it for use with anything else.
ACT Labs RS Racing System	November '98	$69	6	—	Yes	Yes	Racing	—	Versatile, inexpensive wheel.
SideWinder Force Feedback Wheel	December '98	$209	6	Software	Yes	No	Racing	FF	One of the best FF wheels.
Cyborg 3D Digital Stick	January '99	$69.95	8 + 8-way hat	Software	Yes	No	Sims	TH, HS,Y	Good choice for lefties; too many problems to recommend to everyone.
Logitech Wingman Force	January '99	$100	10	Software	No	Yes	Sims/Action	TH,HS,FF	Best FF stick on the market today.
ACT Labs Force RS Wheel	January '99	$139.99	9	—	Yes	No	Racing	—	Another one of the best FF wheels available today.
Gravis Stinger	February '99	$39.99	10	Software	No	No	Laptop Action	—	Great for playing action games on your laptop.
Logitech Wingman Formula Force	February '99	$179	6	Software	Yes	No	Racing	FF	Best of the current batch of Force Feedback-enabled racing wheels.
Saitek R4 Force Feedback Wheel	March '99	$199	4	Software	Yes	No	Racing	FF	A very good wheel — but not quite as good as the Logitech Wingman Force.
Quickshot GenX 500L	March '99	$34.99	4	—	No	No	Sims/Action	TH, HS, Y	A good — but in no way excellent — left-handed joystick.
Saitek Cyborg 3D Digital	March '99	$49.95	12	Software	No	No	General Purpose	TH, HS	A gamepad that offers a lot for gaming within multiple genres.
Belkin HawkEye Pro	March '99	$36.99	4	—	No	No	Sims/Action	TH, HS	With or without USB, this is a joystick to avoid.
AVB Top Shot Force Feedback Racing Wheel	April '99	$139.99	6	Software	Yes	No	Racing	FF	Virtually any other wheel on the market is a better choice than this one.
Interact V4 Force Feedback Racing Wheel	April '99	$129.99	11	Software	Yes	No	Racing	FF	Excellent, inexpensive force feedback wheel.

CONTROLLER KEY

Programmability **indicates how a controller is programmed: through a software interface, hardware built into the stick, or both.** ***Common Features,*** **which many sticks offer, include force feedback (FF), throttle (TH), hat switch (HS), and a yoke, or twist axis (Y). *Price is MSRP except where noted.**

CORRECTION: On the March 1999 Sideways Page, we mistakenly omitted an Editors' Choice logo from our listing of the Advent AV390 speaker system, which received an Editors' Choice rating when it was reviewed in the December 1998 issue. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused. Greg has been taken out back behind the garbage cans and given a good kicking.

the countdown begins...



FLASH POINT™

WWW.FLASH-PNT.COM

Bohemia Interactive

INTERACTIVE MAGIC

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #361

Tech Q&A

Having trouble with your home network? Can't figure out why that video card isn't working? Read on.

Q I recently put together a new system using a combination of old and new parts. When I turn on my "Frankenstein" Pentium II 350MHz with 64MB of RAM, a 4MB AGP video card, and a Diamond Monster 3D II 12MB, the screen is blank, but when I take the Voodoo2 card out, it works just fine. I know I'm hooking the cables up properly and that the card isn't dead, because I put it back in my old computer and it worked just fine. I could really use *PC Gamer*'s help here, because Diamond's tech support info confuses the crap out of me and I'd really like to be able to enjoy my $150 video card.

— Name withheld, via the Internet

A The most common reason for your type of problem is that your Voodoo2 card isn't all the way seated in its PCI slot. Often, computer cases aren't as uniform as they could be, and this can make it difficult to secure some or all of the cards in your system. Try unscrewing your Monster from the case and pushing straight down on the card — firmly, but without forcing it — to ensure that it's snug in its slot. Next, try turning your computer on again — without screwing the card back down — and see if it works. If that does the trick, you may need to leave it unscrewed permanently; tightening the screw can wrench it out of the slot if the motherboard and the back of the PC aren't exactly at right angles. If that doesn't work, there's another possibility: on some motherboards, the Plug and Play BIOS can be pretty finicky and simply refuse to work if it encounters anything confusing — and if you installed several new cards at once instead of one at a time, that may be the problem. Try putting the Voodoo2 card in a different PCI slot. That'll probably get you up and running.



The Game Machine

The Game Machine represents what we consider a solid, affordable gaming PC that will handle every game currently on the shelves. The Game Machine has a maximum theoretical price of $2,500 — but shop around, and you'll find it for much less. In the span of only a very few months, we've taken the processor up from 200MHz to 233 — and now to a Pentium II 300MHz — to keep ahead of recent increases in games' minimum requirements. We've also replaced the Rendition card with a Riva 128. And while we've been sticking with a good, old 3Dfx Voodoo Graphics-based 3D accelerator, Voodoo2s have come down in price and are much faster on PIIs, so having one in The Game Machine makes sense.

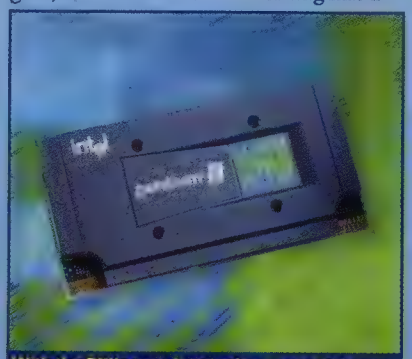
- Intel Pentium II 300 MMX
- 64MB SDRAM
- NVIDIA RIVA 128 card OR 128-bit 2D card
- 3Dfx Voodoo2-based 3D accelerator
- 4GB IDE hard drive
- 16x CD-ROM drive
- Sound Blaster AWE32 AND/ OR positional sound card
- 17" SVGA monitor, .26 dot pitch
- Multi-player gamepad (Gravis Gamepad Pro OR Microsoft SideWinder)
- 56K modem

Q 1.) I know that the Pentium III isn't supposed to show the same dramatic increase in performance over the Pentium II as the Pentium II showed over the original Pentium since the new instructions are just intended to improve audio and video quality in games designed to take advantage of it. But I recently upgraded to a Pentium II 333MHz and was wondering if it would be worth the extra money to upgrade again once the PIII becomes available.

Will the Pentium III require a new motherboard? How fast (in MHz) will the PIII line go? I know the 450 and a 500MHz chips will be the first out of the gate, but could we see something like a PIII 1000MHz in the near future?

2.) I've been dedicated to Diamond's graphics products for years now, and I was wondering if, after 3Dfx's acquisition of STB, Diamond would still be able to make a board based on the Voodoo3. I have read through your February and March issues, but I cannot find any direct answers.

— Nat Ring, via the Internet



With the PIII's new instructions, expect to see a speed increase in games that support them.

A 1.) Actually, most of the game developers we've spoken with have told us they *are* using the Pentium III's enhanced instruction set for increased speed — but you're right; there probably won't be a monumental increase in performance over existing Pentium IIs. And everything we've seen so far indicates that unless you're running a game written to use Pentium III's SSE technology, you won't see any benefit from upgrading to a PIII — unless you're moving to a faster clock speed, of course.

As for whether or not you should make the jump from a 333MHz Pentium II to a 450 or 500MHz PIII as soon as they become available, that's totally up to you — but we'd recommend waiting for that "killer app" to come along before taking the plunge, especially if you're running on any motherboard with an Intel chipset older than the 440BX, because that'll mean you also need to upgrade your motherboard and RAM to accommodate the new processor's 100MHz bus. As for a 1,000MHz Pentium III — if that's even physically possible, we probably won't see one for a couple of years.

2.) From everything we're hearing from STB and 3Dfx, no other company will be able to sell any future products based on 3Dfx chipsets. As we go to press, the acquisition still isn't final, but assuming it goes through, the STB name will vanish and be replaced by 3Dfx for all products going forward. STB's own Black Magic Voodoo2 card will even be repackaged in a 3Dfx-branded box.

Need Help?

If you have a hardware question or comment, write to us at:
Greg Vederman, The Hard Stuff,
PC Gamer, 150 North Hill Drive,
Brisbane, CA 94005
or E-mail: *gvederman@pcgamer.com*

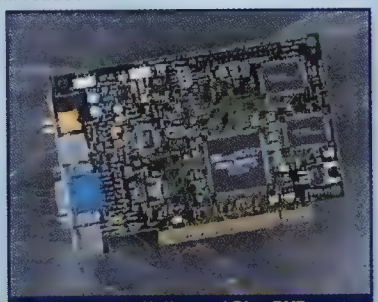
Q I am rapidly running out of hard-drive space and a considering trying a few things in Windows 98 to free space up. I've noticed options in the Drive Space program that can compress your drive to free up space. Is this a good way to go? There's also a utility called Drive Converter (FAT32) that I understand might give me more space. Is this a better option? Will either of these two options reduce game performance?

— Kris Peyton, via the Internet

A We certainly wouldn't recommend compressing your hard drive (it can end up causing all kinds of compatibility problems — and, yes, it will reduce game performance). But converting from Windows 95's FAT16 file system to 98's FAT32 is a very good idea. It may not yield the amount of free space you're hoping for, but it will result in less wasted space on your hard drive. If you need a lot more free space, there's really no substitute for adding a new hard-drive — and since newer, larger hard drives are generally faster, it'll probably bring an increase in game performance. In a pinch, though, you might want to consider adding a removable storage device like Iomega's Zip Drive, which comes in 100MB and 250MB capacities and gives you some place to move files you're not using without having to delete them forever.

Q I have a REALmagic Hollywood Plus DVD/MPEG-2 decoder card, and the picture quality is awesome on both my monitor and my TV. But recently I've run into a problem: At Christmas, I upgraded from a Proview 14" monitor to an NEC MultiSync 17". This new monitor has a great picture (much better then the previous one), but when I use the pass-through cable that connects my primary display adapter to the decoder card, the monitor eventually goes into sleep mode when I play DVD movies. I returned my first Hollywood Plus and exchanged it for another, but the same thing happened. It's now two months later, and I'm stuck using a software DVD decoder, and it just isn't the same! Any ideas on what my problem might be?

— Jason Grant, via the Internet



Sigma Design's Hollywood Plus DVD decoder is the best currently on the market.

A Sounds like a pretty straightforward power-management issue; Windows is shutting down your monitor to save energy, because it thinks the computer isn't being used. To fix this, go into the Windows Power Management menu (it's an option in your Control Panel) and set your computer to never shut your monitor down during long periods of inactivity — or set it to shut down only after several hours, so any DVD movie you're watching will be over before the monitor kicks off. If the problem persists, go into your Display Options menu and disable your screen saver before watching a DVD movie.

Q I received a free trial issue of your magazine, and am impressed, but somewhat dismayed by the demos, which all require DirectX 6.0 to play; I only have version 5.2.

I have downloaded the latest 6.1 version of DirectX from Microsoft, but have not installed it yet, principally because of all the FAQs about problems with video and sound card drivers. I have a Compaq Presario 4814 and am using the Windows 95 operating system. Although I don't expect actual technical support, your helpful reply almost guarantees a new subscriber.

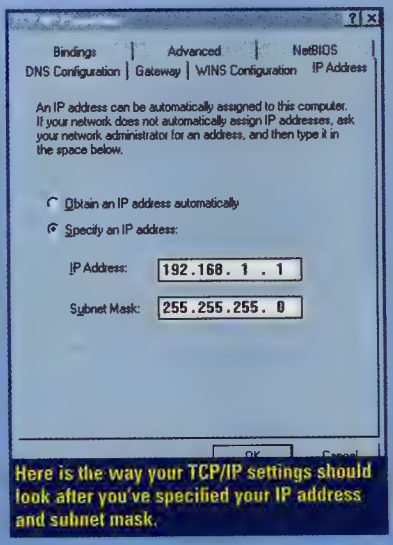
— F.J. Hauck, via the Internet

A Sounds like a good deal, F.J. Believe us, we share your concern about installing any new program that's nearly impossible to uninstall — and DirectX definitely fits that description. On the other hand, since virtually every new PC game uses it, there's really no alternative — and we've had no trouble with DirectX 6.1 here. It isn't really necessary to download it from Microsoft's site, though; we include the latest version of DirectX on every edition of *The CD*.

Q I've got a problem with my home network. I've got two computers hooked up with the same model of network card, and while the network functions flawlessly using IPX, it doesn't work with TCP/IP games like *Descent: Freespace*; neither computer can see the other. I have the TCP/IP protocol installed on both systems and have uninstalled and re-installed the cards and software several times, but I still can't solve the problem. Any advice on what I might try next?

— Jon Covington, Bethesda, MD

A Certainly. It sounds like you're not specifying an IP address under your TCP/IP settings. Without that, it's no wonder you haven't been able to get a TCP/IP game going! The first thing you'll need to do is highlight TCP/IP under your Windows Network settings (part of the Windows Control Panel) and click the Properties button (if you're able to surf the web at all, TCP/IP is already in place). Once you've done that, you should be greeted with the IP Address tab. Right now, you almost certainly have "Obtain an IP address automatically" selected on this option screen. That's fine for surfing the Internet, but not for running a local-area network using TCP/IP; you'll need to specify your where your computer is so that the other computer(s) connected to your LAN can find it. Once you've selected "Specify an IP address," enter in 192.168.1.1 for your first computer's IP address (this is a kind of "null code" suitable for non-dial-up TCP/IP networks). Give each subsequent computer on the network its own address, increasing the final digit in the address by one; i.e., 192.168.1.2, 192.168.1.3, etc.). In the same menu, set each machine's subnet mask as 255.255.255.0. If you've followed these steps and rebooted each system, you should be ready to start playing those TCP/IP games you've been missing.



Here is the way your TCP/IP settings should look after you've specified your IP address and subnet mask.

Glossary

Every month, the Glossary will define terms that appear in The Hard Stuff and may be new or confusing to some readers.

CD-RW
A rewritable CD-ROM format. Unlike CD-R discs, which only let you record data on them once, a CD-RW disc lets you write to it multiple times.

DVD-RAM
One of two competing formats for a new, rewritable version of DVD-ROM that features much greater storage capacity than CD-RW systems. A DVD-RAM disc can hold as much as 2.6GB per disc side.

DVD+RW
Another rewritable DVD format; it can store as much as 3GB of data per disc side.

Gratuitous Violence is 200 Times Faster With a D-Link Network Than With Online Games.



To get the Maximum performance out of a multi-user game, get off the Internet and get on a D-Link 10/100Mb Fast Ethernet Network. Up to 200 times faster than the Internet, and 10 times faster than other legacy networks. Easy to set up and install, a D-Link 10/100 Network In A Box comes with everything you need to build a Windows 95/98 Network.

D-Link®

www.dlink.com

Fry's Electronics · Best Buy · CompUSA · MicroCenter

Prices and Specifications are subject to change without notice. D-Link is a registered trademark and DFE-905 is a trademark of D-Link Systems, Inc. All other trademarks are property of their respective owners. ©Copyright 1999 D-Link Systems Inc. All rights reserved.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #910


ONLY A SELECT FEW IN THE GALAXY
HAVE FLOWN THE *MILLENNIUM FALCON.*
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
www.lucasarts.com/products/alliance • www.starwars.com
©Lucasfilm Ltd & TM. All rights reserved. Used under authorization.



AND UNLESS YOU REACH THE FINAL BATTLE, IT WILL STAY THAT WAY.

STAR WARS X-WING ALLIANCE

A rival family imposes peril on the future of your livelihood. The evil Empire's presence is looming. Your only hope for survival is to join the Rebel Alliance in epic *Star Wars* conflicts. As full-scale galactic battles begin, you will be called upon to command Rebel starfighters, including X-wings and other new spacecraft. You and up to seven other Rebel players will clash with Imperial fighters in spectacular 3D missions. Finally, if you're worthy, you will find yourself in the cockpit of the legendary *Millennium Falcon*, flying against the massive Imperial fleet in the climactic Battle of Endor. Ultimately, it will be your agility, resolve and combat skills in these maneuvers that will determine your destiny. Not to mention, the fate of the entire galaxy.

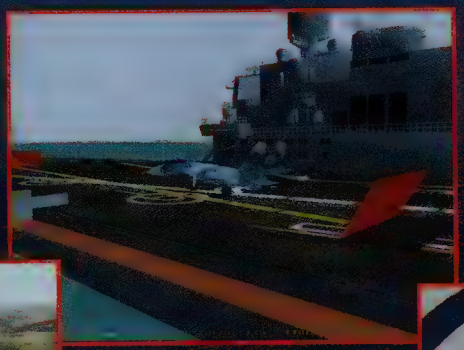
LUCAS Arts

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #447

Prepare for a rare Russian RUSH!

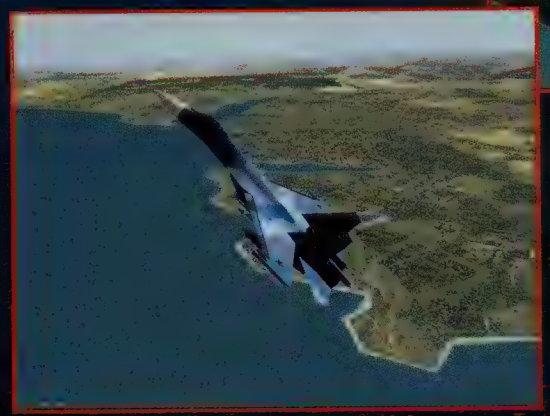
FLANKER™ 2.0 straps you into a brand new carrier-based Su-33 for

Campaign mission module includes resource management, realistic enemy engagement and save now/play later mission save system.



Mission editor lets you create your own realistic theater of operation.

Features detailed 3D ships, aircraft and ground vehicles.



Engage in multiplayer furballs with up to 16 players via a LAN – or go head-to-head on the internet.



www.flanker2.com

©1998 Strategic Simulations, Inc. All rights reserved. The SSI logo is a registered trademark and Flanker and the Digital Combat Series logo are trademarks of Strategic Simulations, Inc. Windows is a registered trademark or trademark of Microsoft Corporation in the U.S. and/or other countries. All other trademarks and registered trademarks are the property of their respective holders.



state-of-the-art air combat – Russian style!

WINDOWS® 95/98
CD-ROM

FLANKER™ 2.0 features stunning graphics and streamlined playability – without compromising the technical excellence of its famous predecessor! Using previously classified Russian satellite imagery and a new 3D graphics engine, this state-of-the-art combat sim provides photo-realistic terrain. Improved flight dynamics, a new 3D sound system, and accurate damage modeling create a true combat experience. Novice users will be delighted by the intuitive menu system. From the interactive training sessions to the ultra-realistic flight model, this premier combat flight sim is truly a rare Russian RUSH!



TO ORDER: Visit your retailer or call: **1-800-716-8503** with Visa/MC (North America only).



SSI

DIGITAL COMBAT SERIES™

RATING PENDING
RP
Visit www.esrb.org or call 1-800-771-3772 for more info
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Go to http://pcgamer.ign.com/request Product #760

Rainbow Sex

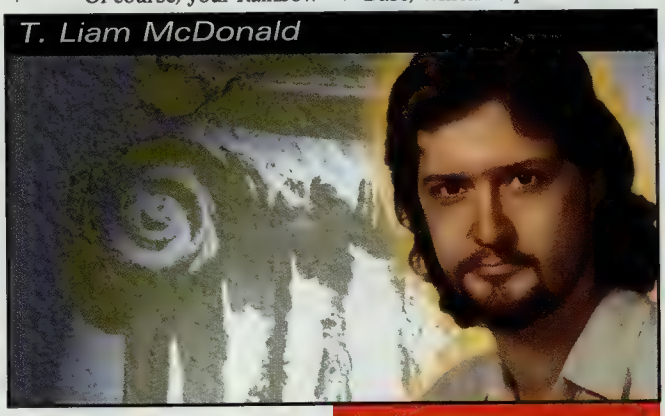
T. Liam McDonald

It doesn't take much to get up a game of *Rainbow Six* at *PC Gamer*. Our *PC Gamer* Award winner for best action game and best multi-player game of 1998 is a favorite, especially in cooperative multi-play mode. That makes any added missions pretty much a no-brainer in the "must-play" department. Red Storm has obliged with a truly excellent set of add-on levels that raise the bar on both design and difficulty.

Rainbow Six: Eagle Watch adds a mere five new missions and two training maps to the original game. If that seems like too few, then you haven't seen these maps. They are absolutely huge and incredibly detailed. Red Storm has created five more-or-less real-world locations with an amazing amount of depth and dropped your team into them for some pretty good missions. The locations are the Taj Mahal, the United States Capitol building, a Russian space shuttle and launch platform, Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament, and China's Forbidden City in Beijing. The two training maps, City Street and Killhouse 2, also make good multi-player maps.

Of these locations, I've only seen the Capitol, Parliament, and Big Ben in real life, but from what I can tell the modeling on these levels is highly accurate. It's worthwhile just turning off the artificial intelligence (type "nobrainer" at the chat prompt) and exploring, just to marvel at the scenery. These are large levels filled with little details and sharp texture maps. Taj Mahal and the Forbidden City, with their more colorful palettes, are particularly amazing and give a real feel for the places. You may never get to the real places, but if you do you'll already have an idea of just how they're laid out. These are probably the most impressive real-world 3D creations I've seen in a consumer product, and with all the work that must have gone into them, it's no wonder the designers could only do five.

Of course, your *Rainbow Six* team isn't exactly a tour group: it's in each of these places on a mission. You'd assume these missions would all be impossibly difficult — as most add-on levels are. I found that several levels in the original game (particularly the last) provided some of the most challenging gameplay I've encountered; compared to that, these provide a medium-to-very-hard challenge. If you tend to use the default plans the game provides, you can consider these levels impossible; I was slaughtered using every last one of them. For an experienced *Rainbow Six* player, though, these provide a strong, but not insurmountable, challenge.

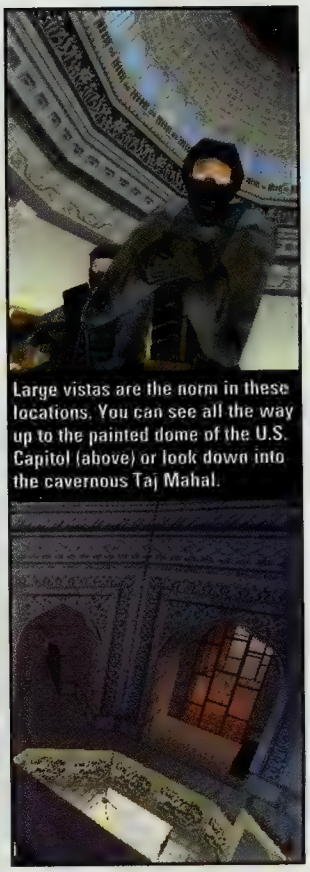




The texture mapping in *Eagle Watch* is terrific, particularly in exotic settings like the Taj Mahal and Beijing's Forbidden City.

A bigger deal for multi-player fans will be the five new mission types, which are really a gas. The core addition is a "Scatter" mode of play, wherein each team member is placed in a different location. It really ups the ante when you have to go even easier on the trigger for fear of a friendly kill, but this mode needs a little tweaking; all too often, you and your teammates "scatter" right into the enemy's crosshairs. The three other main play types are Assassin, in which the teams must kill the opposing general; Team Terrorist Hunt, where two teams compete to kill the most terrorists; and Save the Base, which requires the teams to defuse a bomb located in the opponents' base. Assassin and Team Terrorist Hunt also have "Scatter" modes to isolate team members. These are solid and welcome additions to an already terrific multi-player element.

Five new missions might not seem like a lot, but in Red Storm's hands they become a whirlwind trip through some top tourist attractions.



Large vistas are the norm in these locations. You can see all the way up to the painted dome of the U.S. Capitol (above) or look down into the cavernous Taj Mahal.

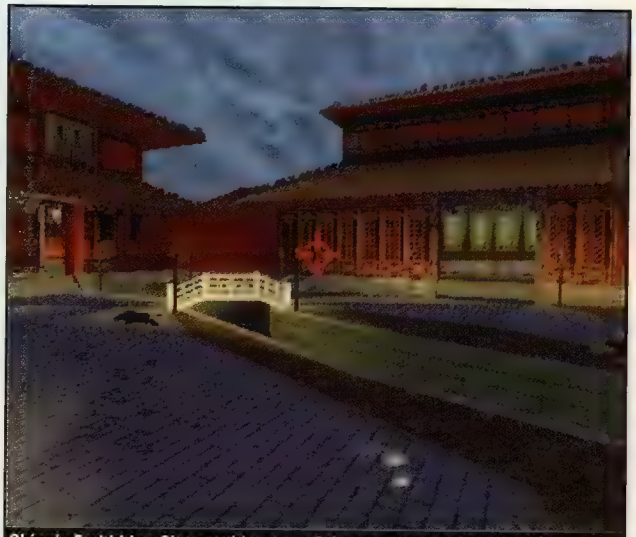
The new pack adds several other worthwhile features to the game as well. Three new weapons are included: Desert Eagle .50-caliber pistol (capable of piercing body armor, but with fewer rounds in the magazine), Heckler & Koch G36K assault rifle (compact and powerful), and the Heckler & Koch G3A3 assault rifle (a good sniper rifle). There are also four new operatives to choose from, each with pretty high skill ratings.

The only real complaint you can level against this add-on is that the missions lack diversity, and could've been a notch more difficult for seasoned players. Most of the

missions are hostage rescues, with one bomb defusing in Big Ben. Since the first two missions are not *that* tough, this leaves only three "hardcore" maps. There's also no narrative line, so there's no real point in forcing gamers to play the missions in order; all the missions should've been made selectable from the main menu (you can do this yourself by adding "shelljump 88" to the command line, but that seems to make the game unstable). All in all, you get your $20 worth of enhancements and more. The location modeling and multi-player additions alone make this a real standout.



Eagle Watch patches *Rainbow Six* to the latest version during install, which improves friendly and enemy AI and allows better grenade tossing.



China's Forbidden City provides one of the most fascinating backdrops for a *Rainbow Six* mission in *Eagle Watch*. Its terrific architecture and labyrinthine rooms really add to the experience.

More for FS98

PC Aviator has put out a massive, detailed "megascenery" pack for *Microsoft Flight Simulator 98* and *Combat Flight Simulator*. The *Pacific Northwest* scenery is huge and detailed. The attention to detail is bordering on the obsessive, but when your sole purpose for flying is to stare out the simulated window at the simulated scenery, that's wholly appropriate.

Pacific Northwest is everything it claims to be. It maps 70,000 square miles of terrain from Landsat imagery, encompassing Washington State and large chunks of Oregon and British Columbia. The three major cities in this region (Seattle, Vancouver, and Portland) are mapped in amazing detail. There's no shortage of picturesque vistas, ranging from Puget Sound to Mount St. Helens. The package comes with three full-size flight charts, a fat book stuffed with approach charts, and some postcards. The only real problem I had with it was the same problem I had with *Flight Sim 98*: it requires a beast of a system to run at full detail. I'm talking P300 with 64MB RAM or better for something approaching optimal performance.

This is the first add-on I've seen from PC Aviator, and the work looks good. The Australian company can be found at *www.pcaviator.com.au*, and it produces and sells a whole line of flight sim add-ons. There are also megascenery packs for Melbourne and Victoria, and the company plans more U.S. packs. The web site features the largest selection of flight sim enhancements I've come across, with a retail site offering just about all the scenery packs and add-ons made for *MS Flight Simulator*.

PCG

BUG PATCHES*



BALDUR'S GATE

***Baldur's Gate* v. 1.01.4315** (Interplay Productions): Baldur's Gate now checks the cache size and gives a warning if the user is running out of hard disk space. Also checks hard drive for space before saving games. Script compiler now works. Many other changes, including a new addition that lets players adjust the number of pathfinding nodes for better pathfinding. *BG114315.ZIP*

***Falcon 4.0* v. 1.04** (MicroProse): Fixed problem with campaign debriefing reporting you as MIA even after you successfully completed a mission and landed. Lots of Tactical Engagement fixes. More memory leaks have been fixed. Many other fixes. *F4104US.ZIP*

***Fallout II* v. 1.02d** (Interplay Productions): Boxing in New Reno will no longer lock up the computer. The Dice Game will give you winnings. The Lloyd quest in New Reno will not lock the computer. Talking to Tandi about the Vault 15 quest will not lock the computer. Loading and saving games has been sped up. Party members will not turn hostile (under most circumstances) any longer, so you'll be able to talk to them all the time. Ghouls in Gecko will not randomly shoot at you. Other changes. Save games from version 1.0 will no longer be compatible with this version. *F2V102D.ZIP*

***Madden NFL 99* v. 2.07** (EA Sports): Fixes frame rate slow-down some users experienced while playing on grass fields. Lets you download and install updated rosters on a weekly basis without affecting any of your current stats in season mode. Users now have the ability to edit players within the rosters. Increased Remote Play stability. Enhanced Coach Mode. Improved AI running. *MDNP207.ZIP*

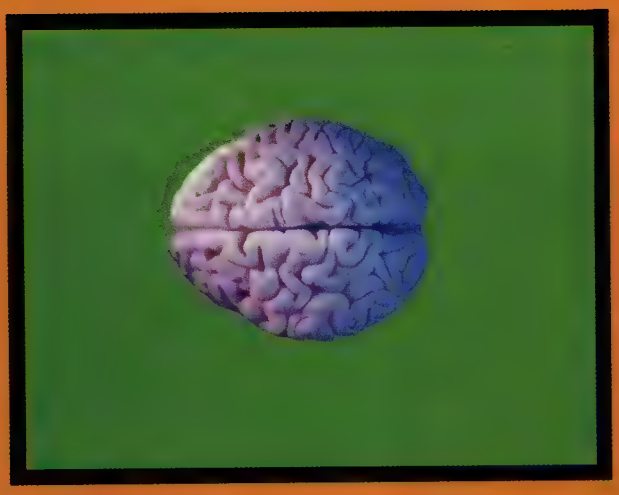
***Quest for Glory V: Dragon Fire* v. 1.1** (Sierra): You can enter the Dragon Blood Pool multiple times. Larger import saves can be imported to the game. You can cut and burn the Hydra by yourself. You are able to drop inventory items only once. You can exit the West Gate Entrance using the Open Spell. Many other changes. *QFG5UP11.ZIP*

***Starsiege: Tribes* v. 1.2** (Dynamix): Sending in-game private messages from the IRC no longer repeats the first message sent. No longer have to scroll to the top of the Join Screen to select a sort column. In the Join Server list, you must now double-click on a server to re-ping it. The Join Server screen now has a "buddy" search field. Servers that contain players who's names match the contents of the field will have a double eye icon in the favorites column. The buddy drop-down keeps the last 10 search strings. Selecting a string out of the drop down brings the selection to the top of the list. Join Server now has "refresh all" and "refresh vis" buttons, refresh all refresh the server list from the master server. Refresh vis will only query the servers currently listed in the server list. Pinging a server in the Join Server list by selecting it no longer re-sorts or re-filters the list. The voice menu will now appear above or below the chat box depending on whether the box is near the top or bottom of the screen. The voice menu is now green. The IRC URL launching no longer changes the URL to upper case when starting the browser. Many other changes. *TRIB1012.ZIP*

***Thief: The Dark Project* v. 1.33** (Eidos Interactive): In some rare cases, throwing lots of flash bombs could result in *Thief* crashing. This has been fixed. Several minor bugs in missions have been fixed. Now supports joysticks and Creative Labs' Environmental Audio (EAX). *THIEF133.ZIP*

*YOU'LL FIND ALL OF THESE PATCHES ON *THE CD!*

Come see us at E3
Booth #6755
May 13-15, 1999



This is your brain.



This is your brain on The AVB
Force Feedback Racing Wheel.



FORCE

GC-FBW1

FORCE FEEDBACK RACING WHEEL

AVB

USB

SOPHISTICATED PC GAME
DEVICES FOR TOMORROW

WWW.AVBTECH.COM

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #016

The Web Triumphant

There's an episode of "The Simpsons" where Homer sets up an Internet company in his basement. Soon enough, a customer comes in wanting his connection upgraded from a 28.8KB modem to a fiber-optic T1 line. Homer, who naturally has no idea what the guy is talking about, looks at him vacantly, blinks, then asks, "Can I have some money now?"

The scene is a shrewd, if cynical, summary of the current investment feeding-frenzy over Internet stocks. Take any ordinary endeavor — auctions, used cars, selling books — give it an online "component," and reap a fortune with a quick stock offer. And so a company like Yahoo ends up costing $400 a share, as if it and its web pages were worth more than all these old companies with hard assets like tractor factories and oil fields.

Never afraid to ride the bandwagon, our friends in the games business have been reinventing themselves as "Internet companies" over the past six months. And I don't mean actual Internet startups like TEN or Mplayer, but the old-line, traditional publishers.

A few months back, both Interplay and 3DO put out wispy press releases about their "Internet strategies" — and both companies' stock values rose, briefly, as a result of the announcements.

More meaningful is Interactive Magic's mutation from a traditional "sim and strategy" house to a multiplayer gaming network with a side-order of solo games.

Even Electronic Arts is remaking its most storied PC development house — Origin — into an online-only division [For the full story on Origin, see our Eyewitness section in the April issue.]. Most ominously of all, Sierra, in the midst of its Great February Massacre (when it fired a couple hundred people) made noises about retooling itself as an "Internet" company, with its World Opponent Network as evidence. Is this the future, dumping solo development for online gaming? What hath *Doom* wrought?

Ron Chaimowitz, ex-CEO of GT Interactive (he's now the chief of GT's new 'net division, One Zero) will speak at the Game Developers' Conference, asking: is PC gaming now an Internet content business?

Who knows what Chaimowitz will say, but I wonder what 'net-mania is doing to our games. It's hard enough to make money publishing games, and the Internet makes it tougher. On one side, developers use the 'net to leverage their clout for bigger contracts, ala Ion Storm. Meanwhile, retailers and distributors still extort their cuts, selling shelf space and returning unsold games whenever they want.

And there's another looming shadow; if the Internet is the proverbial Rock, then the mass market is the Hard Place, because PC games are now mainstream and the big kids have come to play: Hasbro and Mattel with their tenuous toy games — their Tonkas, Scrabbles, and Barbies. Call it the *Deer Hunter* Effect: more shelf space is packed with dumbed-down mass market fare, shrinking the space for real games.

Caught in the whirlwind, it's no wonder PC publishers look to the magic of the Internet as their salvation, the only alternative to marginalization, acquisition, or outright bankruptcy. If only that Yahoo pixie-dust would rub off...

So more of the industry's development budget is moving from traditional solo games into either massively multiplayer or mass-market fare. There's no choice; publicly traded companies must grow shareholder profits, and so they must either wade online or sell out to the mass market.

Weirdly, these two forces — the mass market and the Internet — are connected. Why does the mass market audience have PCs? To get on the 'net. Why do they want to get on the 'net? Because it's fun: we ordered something online, we E-mailed a relative!

But soon, a 'net-ready PC will become a mandatory household appliance, like a TV, because business will find it more cost efficient to deal with customers electronically rather than through mail, phone, or face-to-face. To make sure you go electronic, they will penalize you if you don't. Estimates range as high as two billion PCs within the next ten years, up from the two hundred million or so out there now.

So when everyone has a PC, who will own the games market? The old Interactive Magic, with its stable of turn-based wargames? Origin, with its roleplaying extravaganzas? Or the Mattels and Hasbros of the world, with their Scrabbles, Monopolies, and Barbies?

The Internet, she giveth, and she taketh away. I am not anti-Internet — I wouldn't write this column if I were. Perhaps Yahoo is the next NBC; maybe it really is worth $400 a share. And perhaps what we as gamers lose in the short term we'll regain in the long run, over the many many years to come. Someday, we'll have cheaper games, bought directly from developers, downloaded to our hard drives, eliminating *all* the middlemen — publishers, distributors, and retailers. Maybe we'll also have better games — persistent-world games, games with both real-time voice *and* video.

And if all we want to do is play *Civilization*, well — there'll always be emulators.

PCG

Jason Bates



The Internet is tearing down the games industry and remaking it in its own image — but is this a good thing or a bad thing?



If online gaming goes mass-market, will games like *E-Mail Battleship* inherit the Internet?

Outside the Box

It never ceases to amaze me. Every day, when I fire up my Internet browser, it seems like I come across another great new web site run by a gamer with a lot of talent and/or a desire to help his fellow man get more from the games we play.

Some games make it easy, including editors with the final package to let the user tweak various settings and roster information. Even still, it takes a concerted effort and sometimes a large amount of research to come up with changes worth using. Other games leave the end-user high and dry, with no apparent way to make adjustments. Not to be thwarted, many gamers with programming skills have found clever ways around this lack of customizability, digging into the games' source code to bend it to their will. Then there are the people that go an extra mile or two, writing complementary programs that add new features to games.

However these add-ons came to be, the bottom line is that they all enhance or extend the enjoyment you can squeeze out of a particular game, and the work that went into creating them is greatly appreciated, at least by this sports gamer. (As a rule, none of these files or programs is supported by the companies that created the original games, and the authors aren't looking to make any money off of their work. If you decide to use any of these, remember to back up your original files and, if your gaming experience was improved by the authors' work, send off an E-mail and thank them for their efforts.)

Baseball

Site Name: Front Page Sports: Baseball Fan Page
URL: *www.toltbbs.com/~tjkraz/BBPro*
Site Owner: Tim Krasniewski
Highlights: Although ancient by computer game standards, Sierra's *Front Page Sports: Baseball 98* is still the only real choice for managerial types looking to run a career league, especially online. Tim's site features utilities and patches and a great selection of additional season and team files. He also keeps a comprehensive and fairly up-to-date listing of the many leagues you can join for some online play.

Site Name: Rudy Kamman's FPS Utilities
URL: *earth.vol.com/~kammrud*
Site Owner: Rudy Kamman
Highlights: This site contains some amazing files for *Front Page Sports: Baseball* fans.



Rudy's utilities range from the practical to the spectacular. On the practical side, RESTRUST keeps track of a player's status and lets you know if he needs to rest, or if you've been overplaying him and his ratings have declined. One of the greatest utilities created for any game is BBRECORD. This program sifts through the box scores of past games and keeps track of nearly every stat, streak, or accomplishment you can imagine. Want to know who has the longest current hitting streak or which players have hit for the cycle? This brilliant utility is on the job. There are plenty more cool and useful files to be found here, and Rudy is always working on new projects, so visit his site today.

Site Name: Dr. Baseball's High Heat 1999 Site
URL: *www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Stadium/5632*
Site Owner: Dr. Baseball
Highlights: This site hasn't been updated in a while, but if you're still playing *High Heat* (and if you're not, you should be), you'll find some handy utilities at the good Doctor's site. A team and player editor, as well as a way to fine-tune the difficulty levels, can be found here.

User-created add-ons can breathe new life into many sports games Smoke tells you about some of his favorites and where to find them.

Football

Site Name: Charles D. Centrelli Jr.'s Computer Sports Made Better
URL: *www.gooddogs.com/charles/Default.htm*
Site Owner: Charlie Centrelli
Highlights: This site consists of Charlie's home-brewed fixes for a few different games, but the ones you can't miss are his files for *Football Pro 99* (assuming you've opted not to take advantage of Sierra's return policy). He's also made it easy for you to get everything you need in just one download with his Total Package file.

Site Name: Madden Central
URL: *www.maddencentral.com*
Site Owner: Mike Murphy
Highlights: Mike's got the lowdown on all things Madden. Go to the Files area, and you'll find a nice selection of user-created roster patches — including Mike's own classic patch that adds correct player names and skin tones to all the classic teams in *Madden 99*.

Site Name: NCAA Football 99
URL: *www.dma.org/~kraus/ncaa99/ncaa.html*
Site Owner: Jason a.k.a. LishSux
Highlights: *NCAA Football 99* is a great game, but since the college players must keep their amateur status, EA Sports was unable to add player names to the game. Using the game's editor, our friend LishSux took on the time-consuming chore of entering all of the players' names for every one of the 112 teams. Now, as long as you're playing in 3D mode, the names will appear on the backs of the players' jerseys — and the announcer will even call a player by name about half the time.

Hockey

Site Name: The Great One — NHL Supersite
URL: *greatone.gamenation.com/tgo99.htm*
Site Owner: The Great One Team (too many to list)
Highlights: These guys aren't kidding about this being a super site. If you're into *NHL 99*, you *need* to have this site in your bookmarks. Whatever it is you're looking for can be found here (plus a lot of stuff you probably never even thought of), including roster patches and new art for goalies, uniforms, arenas, and even the game's interface!

Basketball

Site Name: The NBA Live Series Center
URL: *www.tassoft.com /nbalive*
Site Owner: Tim Tschirner
Highlights: Whatever installment of the NBA Live series you're playing, Tim's site has the files you need to pump up the jam. There are roster patches you can plug into your game (both to correct the fatigue problem in the latest version, as well as NCAA and legends rosters), new cyberfaces, and new art for jerseys, courts, and even shoes.

Site Name: Alan's NBA Live 99 League Page
URL: *www.cris.com/~Usctrojn /NBA98/NBA.htm*
Site Owner: Alan Wilson
Highlights: Alan's roster patch for *NBA Live 99* is the best one I've found. There's a link to it at The Series Center, but sometimes Alan updates the file, and this is the only place to be sure you've got the latest version. He also runs a *Live 99* modem league, so if you're interested in a little online competition and don't mind spending a few bucks on long-distance calls from time to time, head on over and sign up.

Golf

Site Name: The Course Depot
URL: *coursedepot.gagames.com*
Site Owner: Jeremy Silva and Ed Cope
Highlights: If there's news occurring in the world of computer golf, you can be sure The Course Depot will be there to give you the scoop. This site and its affiliates' main focus is on the Jack Nicklaus series, mainly due to the course editor. At last count, there were more than 260 courses available, many with in-depth reviews to make your downloading decisions easier. As more golf games offer course editors (Sierra's *PGA 99* may be available by the time you read this) expect The Course Depot to expand its horizons to include the newcomers.

Site Name: Yeastman's Corner
URL: *members.xoom.com /Yeastman/welcome.html*
Site Owner: Yeastman?
Highlights: Whoever Yeastman really is, one thing is clear; he's a friend to gamers of all kinds. His site is loaded with helpful files for a number of games, but the one you'll really want is his "Tourney3" sound script for *Links LS*. This collection of recorded professional commentary has nearly 300 different .wav files in it to liven up any round of *Links*. So get rid of "Looks like you hit the tree, Jim," and let Peter Alliss, Ken Venturi, and a number of other big-name announcers join you on your round.

Racing

Site Name: Motocross Madness Central
URL: *mcm.telefragged.com*
Site Owner: WreckRman2
Highlights: Wreck and his crew have put together a fine site dedicated to *Motocross Madness* (our *PC Gamer* Award winner for best racing game of 1998) and the motorcycle racing world in general. As far as game enhancements, you'll be in shock when you see the list of additional tracks that are available, including ones set in outdoor venues.

Site Name: NFSFuture
URL: *www.nfscheats.com /nfsfuture/*
Site Owner: Future Productions Design Team
Highlights: This is an awesome site for *Need for Speed III* fans. The guys of Future Productions are extremely talented and have come up with some unique car designs for you to download. Even if you don't like or own the game, you'll want to check out this site and just look at the screenshots. They also have a good selection of cars from other users that I haven't seen elsewhere, and lots of new tracks. Some of the tracks just have new textures that replace those on the existing tracks, while others have completely new layouts thanks to the user-created editor you can download from the NFSIII Files section.

Site Name: 3D Speed: Computer Arcade Racing
URL: *www.teleport.com /~r1d3r/nfsthree/index.html*
Site Owner: Scott Linfoot
Highlights: This site is low in quantity, but very high in quality. I was so impressed with Scott's *Need for Speed III* car designs, I asked him if he would make a *PC Gamer* car. Check out this month's CD-ROM for his latest masterpiece; click the button on the opening screen of this month's disc to get your paws on this hot new car (and the others mentioned in this column), or look in the addons/cars folder!

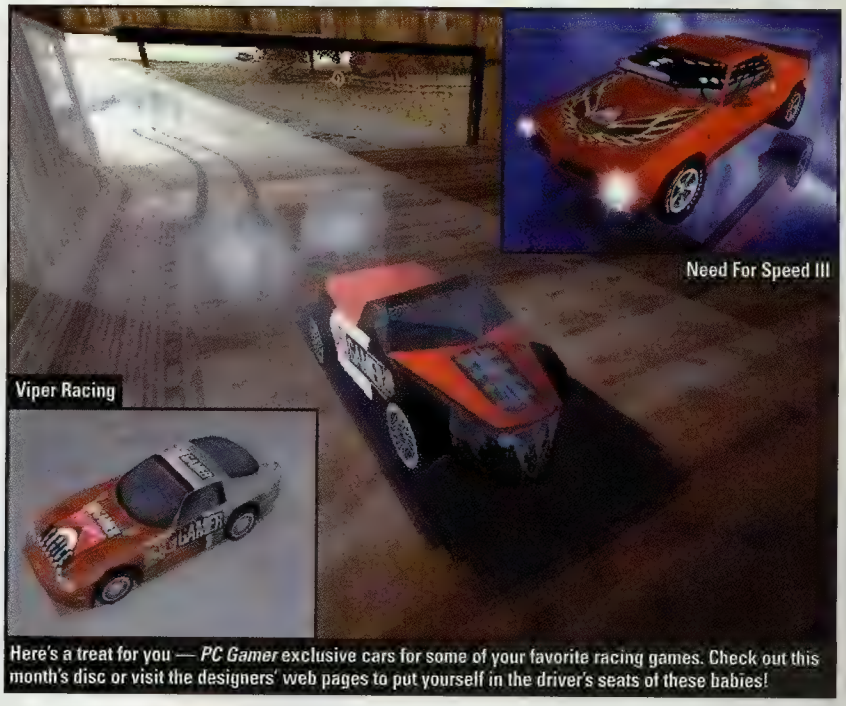
Site Name: D&R Racing
URL: *www.geocities.com /SiliconValley/Station/4348*
Site Owner: Robert Brown and David Walden
Highlights: If you want some new squad cars to chase perps with in *Need for Speed III*, head on over to D&R for an amazing selection of pursuit vehicles. These guys also do some great work designing their own car models, so I asked them if they could make a car for us. To my delight, they sent me *two*!

Site Name: The Unofficial Test Drive 5 Cars Page
URL: *webhome.idirect.com /~stratman/td5*
Site Owner: Paul a.k.a. Stratman
Highlights: If you're having trouble unlocking the bonus cars in *Test Drive 5*, give Stratman's page a visit to see what you're missing. He's got a little bonus in store for you, too; custom-made cars. He was even kind enough to work up a *PC Gamer* car for us, which is quite cool and can be found on this month's disc.

Site Name: ViperPainter's Viper Racing Web Site
URL: *www.geocities.com /MotorCity/Speedway/9993 /index.html* or *www.viperpainter.com*
Site Owner: James Fritz, a.k.a. ViperPainter
Highlights: *Viper Racing* comes with a paint-shop feature, but it won't let you make the great skins that ViperPainter has on offer at his site. I also found a link to something called Mike DiPonio's Gallery here. Mike does some excellent work, and I asked him if he could design a *PC Gamer* skin I could use in *Viper Racing*. Mike was kind enough to oblige, and you can see how cool the car is by grabbing it off this month's disc. Happy Racing!

This is by no means a definitive list, and I'm sure there are plenty more sites and add-ons out there that are just as valuable to sports gamers; this list should be a good starting point, though. Also, please keep in mind that the Internet is still a very volatile place, and web sites sometimes have to find new homes, so the addresses I've provided may change. Let me know which are your favorites by writing me at *rob@pcgamer.com*, and maybe we'll revisit this topic in a future column.

PCG

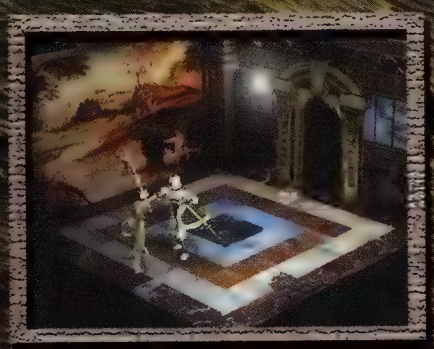


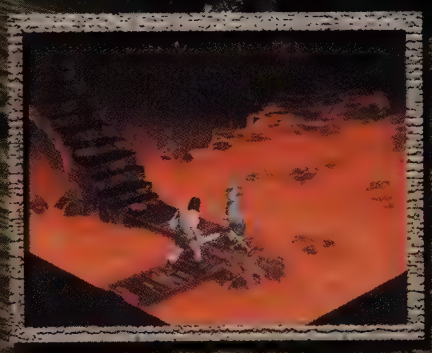
Here's a treat for you — *PC Gamer* exclusive cars for some of your favorite racing games. Check out this month's disc or visit the designers' web pages to put yourself in the driver's seats of these babies!

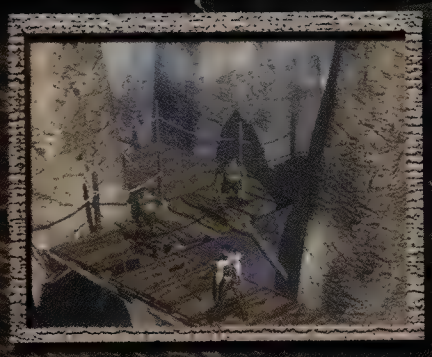
Clans

As Legends foretold, evil has returned to the land. A dark tide of death and destruction is now raging over your once-peaceful realm, turning brother against brother, clan against clan. Summon your courage and raise your sword for a fight to the death against a demonic monster who feeds on hatred and despair.

- Battle as one of four unique characters.
- Conquer malicious hordes and mythical beasts through hundreds of miles of dangerous lands.
- Cast spells, unravel puzzles, interact with extraordinary characters.
- Clash with up to 4 players over Internet or LAN.







Coming Soon!

Strategy First
www.strategyfirst.com

Computer Games Strategy Plus

GT Interactive Software
www.gtinteractive.com

TEEN
AGES 13+
PC CD-ROM

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #320

©1999 Strategy First Inc. All rights reserved. Clans is a trademark of Strategy First. All rights reserved. All other trademarks and copyrights are the properties of their respective owners. ©1999 GT Interactive Software.

How to Make the PGL Worth Watching

Several months ago, I attended the Fall 1998 finals for the Professional Gamers' League, held here in San Francisco. My main motivation for going was not to see the *Quake II* matches but to hear id Software's John Carmack talk about *Quake III*. The matches themselves were somewhat interesting to watch in the midst of wall-to-wall *Quake* fans crammed into a hot room...

...but not *that* interesting. The PGL has the same problem as Greco-Roman wrestling. Unless you're a hardcore fan of the sport, it's just not that much fun to watch. Professional wrestling, on the other hand, is a completely different story.

The difference is that professional wrestling has dozens of interesting characters who run the gamut from good to evil. It's been called a soap opera for men, and rightly so. World Championship Wrestling (better known as the WCW) has everything in a soap opera that we young men could possibly want: bigger-than-life characters, grand entrances, betrayals, cheating, and — of course — the Nitro Girls.

What does the PGL have? Well, they have Thresh, who handily wins a tournament twice a year. Now, I'm not criticizing Thresh; the guy is obviously the best *Quake* player alive. But as far as the PGL is concerned, having only one star player can get a little boring after a while. So here are a few things I think the PGL can do to make itself more interesting:

Limited Number of Players

Pick the top 50 players and make them the "professional athletes." Keeping the number of "professionals" to a small number ensures that fans have a chance to get to know each of the players and their backgrounds. Over time, fans will form opinions about who they like and don't like and can show their support in a variety of ways. Just think of all the merchandising opportunities the organizers of the PGL would have if they really put their hearts into promoting their players.

Weekly Events

Once you have fans hooked, you need to keep them interested over the long haul. The best way to do this is with frequent events. WCW has "Monday Nitro," a three hour extravaganza interleaving wrestling matches and behind-the-scenes video clips. The PGL should have something like this. Officials can organize matches to be played over the Internet, record demos, and compile everything in an attractive web-based presentation on a weekly basis. Not only does this give fans something to sink their teeth into each week, but it's a great way to put the spotlight on all the players — not just the world champion.

Michael Luton, a.k.a. "Sandmoose"



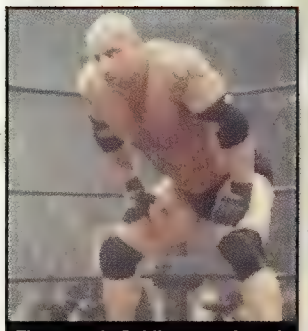
Hold Quarterly LAN Events

Due to the unpredictable nature of the Internet, title matches should only be fought in a LAN environment. A live event makes possible all kinds of things that couldn't be done in the aforementioned web presentation, like grand entrances and face-to-face trash talk. The equivalent of dragging a steel chair into the ring might be disconnecting a players' mouse or keyboard while he's not looking, or covering his mouse pad with sticky goo.

More Than One Champion

When it comes to first-person shooters, the PGL has prizes for *Quake II* one-on-one deathmatch and *Quake* four-on-four clan deathmatch. If the WCW can have four different championship titles, why can't the PGL have more than one championship title, too? If I were running things, there would be several titles simultaneously up for grabs depending on which games are popular with the players at the time. Right now that might include *Quake II*, *Shogo: Mobile Armor Division*, *SiN*, and *Half-Life*, with *Quake III Arena* and *Unreal Tournament* soon to be added.

The Professional Gamers' League needs a shot in the arm, and Sandmoose thinks professional wrestling might just point the way.



The name is Goldberg, punk, and the only question on his mind is "Who's next?" Why doesn't PGL champ Thresh have any fearsome catch lines like that?

More Gimmick Matches

The main attraction at a recent WCW pay-per-view event was a gimmick match where a taser gun was suspended high above the ring. The two wrestlers had to climb a ladder to get to it, and the first one who grabbed the taser gun and used it on the other guy won. Isn't that the coolest thing you've ever heard of? With the level editors and scripting abilities in today's games, the possibilities for gimmick matches are endless. How about a "lava match" where you can only score points by forcing your opponent into lava? Or an extreme-low-gravity match? I think it would be great to see two heavy-hitters go at it with non-standard levels and rules.

So what do you think about all of this? Am I making any sense here, or have I been drinking too much King Cobra? E-mail me at *mluton@pcgamer.com* and let me know.

PCG

Tabletop Online

Online roleplaying games have become massive worlds with hundreds — if not thousands — of players, all competing against each other for the role of "most important character."

If you go online, you can bet you'll spend most of your time building experience and skills for your chosen character, a bit of time actually talking and roleplaying your character, and maybe a small amount of time completing quests. This is what we've come to expect from playing an RPG over the Internet, and that's what *Ultima Online*, *EverQuest*, *Meridian 59*, and countless other online RPGs have delivered. But a game being developed in Northern California aims to change that.

Nihilistic Software, a small company located in Novato, California, has ideas that may change the entire multi-player RPG experience. The company, whose members include former LucasArts employees who were the major force behind *Jedi Knight*, plans to accomplish this through the Storyteller portion of its first RPG, *Vampire: The Masquerade/Redemption*.

White Wolf's *Vampire: The Masquerade* roleplaying universe is second only to TSR's Advanced Dungeons & Dragons in terms of popularity, and many think it offers greater flexibility when it comes to sheer storytelling. That storytelling ability will be used to its fullest in the single-player portion of the PC game. You play the game from a third-person perspective, and you have complete control over the camera. Clicking the mouse button controls movement as well as the real-time combat, and actions such as picking up items and manipulating objects. During the single-player game, you can have a party of four characters.

But it's what the game promises in the way of multi-player that's really intriguing. When *Redemption* ships, it'll include development tools to let players create their own adventures using the game's engine. Similar to the *Quake* level editors, these tools will let gamers play with their own textures, sounds, levels — basically anything they want. Of course, for the more intricate stuff, they'll need to learn the game's Java-like programming language, but there's no doubt some dedicated gamers will do just that.

What can you do once you've finished your own custom-made adventure? Why, invite eight of your closest friends (or Internet acquaintances) to play it, of course! The player who creates the world acts as the Storyteller, or Game Master (GM). Players come to the virtual game table with pre-made characters in hand. They then progress through the custom adventure, solving puzzles, fighting monsters, and generally experiencing what could be roleplaying heaven. The Storyteller monitors the action, creating new monsters when needed, modifying situations, and taking care of all the stuff a good GM does. The Storyteller can even take control of non-player characters to give players truly customized interaction with their world — no more canned responses to questions chosen from a dialog tree. The Storyteller can even "whisper" information to a single player, and let him decide whether to share it with the party or use it to his own advantage.

Robert Huebner, director of technology at Nihilistic, says, "The engine itself is completely open-ended in terms of graphics, sounds, levels — even scripted events. You can create your own items that have scripted properties when you use them." It's similar to the scripting language used in *Jedi Knight*, which was powerful enough that the development team could write all of the game's Capture the Flag mode as a script. You can imagine the power users will have in creating their own environments.

Vampire: The Masquerade/Redemption will come with several ready-made adventures for Storytellers who don't want to dive directly into their own creations right away. Players can also download multi-player modules from other users. Nihilistic hopes this will foster the same sort of online roll-your-own frenzy that made *Quake* so popular and long-lived. Ray Gresko, president and CEO of Nihilistic, says, "You might see Storytellers that are held at a Thresh-like status because they're so great at telling a story."

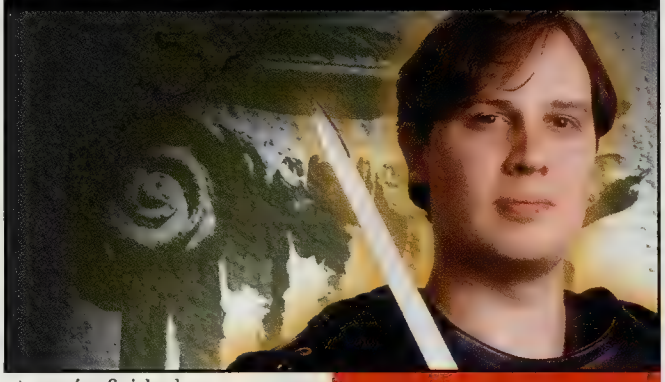
Nihilistic hasn't announced any official online partnerships yet, but the company plans to establish some sort of central hub where players can start or join multi-player games in progress. Storytellers will have complete control over who joins their games. If they suspect players of "hacking" their characters, or if someone starts rampantly player-killing, away they go. A central server will monitor statistics of Storytellers, so you can determine if a particular Storyteller has a history of intentionally screwing over their players — or of being too nice to them.

"The Storyteller system actually solves more problems than it creates," says Huebner. Since the player who's ultimately responsible for creating the game is in charge, you can bet he won't stand for any nonsense. If someone wants to host a "kill-or-be-killed" game, that's possible, but Gresko says "we just don't think that would as much fun."

It's still too early to tell whether or not the game will succeed in its attempt to recreate the tabletop experience. One of many foreseeable problems lies in communication — it'll never be as easy to type messages to your party as it is to simply set down your beer and talk to them across a table. But it's delving into an exciting new world of RPGs — tabletop-style gameplay on your computer. And that can only be a good thing.

PCG

Michael Wolf



So far, no one has quite managed to recreate the tabletop roleplaying experience on the computer — but one game just might.

ARE YOU PREDATOR OR PREY?

FALCON GAMING PCs MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.



CALL:
(888) FALCON-1
(888) 325-2661

WWW.FALCON-NW.COM

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #205

Now Playing Faster on Falcon Northwest Gaming PCs!

ALIENS VERSUS PREDATOR

A Fox Interactive Production

FOX INTERACTIVE

FALCON NORTHWEST COMPUTER SYSTEMS

Win a Trip to E3!

Enter our E3 contest, and you could win a free trip to the biggest gaming event of the year — the Electronic Entertainment Expo in Los Angeles!

If you're a hardcore gamer, your Mecca is the annual Electronic Entertainment Expo. This annual gathering is where it all happens: games are announced and previewed, parties are attended, and deals are made. For three glorious days, it's just about games, games, and more games.

And since getting tickets to E3 (and the all important after-hour parties) is next to impossible, we'll be giving two lucky winners the red carpet treatment. You'll walk the floor, demo games and hardware, and then plop your butt in a cab and head out for some partying!

And what do you have to do to land this, the most treasured of prizes? Show us that you are the biggest and best fan of *PC Gamer*.

The Prize Package:

- **A 3-Day Expo Pass to E3**
- **Round-trip Airfare to Los Angeles**
- **Two Nights Hotel Accommodation**
- **Tickets to the Coolest E3 Parties**
- **$100 Spending Money**





There are two ways to enter:

1 Photograph

Express your love for *PC Gamer* and gaming by sending us a picture of you and an issue of *PC Gamer*. We leave the rest up to you — use your imagination!

2 Video

Express your love for *PC Gamer* and gaming by creating a video that leaves no doubt you are a gaming freak in dire need of a free trip to E3.

Send your entry to:

PC Gamer's E3 Contest
Imagine Media
c/o Erik Piller
150 North Hill Drive
Brisbane, CA 94005

Be sure to include your name, address, phone number, and E-mail. All entries must be received by April 23, 1999.

SMALL PRINT: No purchase is necessary to win. Entries must be received by April 23rd, 1999. All entries become exclusive property of Imagine and will not be acknowledged or returned. The winner(s) will be chosen on April 26th, 1999, and be notified either by email or telephone. The name(s) of the winners will be sent to anyone who requests it and who provides a SASE. The winner(s) will be chosen by a panel of judges. Judges will base their decision 50% on creativity and 50% on originality of the entry(s). Imagine shall not be responsible for lost, late, misdirected, or damaged entries.

The prize is nontransferable. The prize package can be substituted for a gift certificate to EB World in the sum of $500, and substitution will be enforced if winner is under 21 years of age. The contest is open to residents of the United States only, except those residents of Arizona, Maryland, Vermont and Puerto Rico are not eligible to participate. The winner may be required to sign an affidavit of eligibility/release of liability/prize acceptance within 5 business days of receipt; failure to do so upon request will result in forfeiture of the prize. By acceptance of the prize, the winner agrees to the use of their name and/or likeness for purposes of advertising, trade, or promotion without any further compensation, unless prohibited by law. Imagine shall not be responsible for any damages or expenses that the winner might incur as a result of this contest or the receipt of any prize. Two prize packages will be awarded, one for the "best photo" category, and the other for the "best video" category. Each prize consists of one round-trip airline ticket (unless winner is local to LA, then appropriate transportation arrangements will be made) to Los Angeles (arrival 5/13 and departure 5/15), 2 nights accommodation (5/13-14), one 3-day exhibit pass to E3, and $100 spending money. Total approximate prize value is $700. The winner is responsible for paying any income taxes on the value of the prize received. Void where prohibited or restricted by law. All federal, state and local regulations apply.

Spring Cleaning

Every year at about this time, I spend a day cleaning out the detritus that threatens to smother me in my little North Carolina office, and I always find some tidbits worth noting but not quite suitable for an entire column. Before I dump the garbage can (man, those Colt .45 bottles take up a lot of room!), I'll pass a few along to you:

Hasbro/ Avalon Hill

First, the good news: It looks like Hasbro's purchase of Avalon Hill may not necessarily be the disaster I anticipated. Yes, we'll see some repackaged board games, but some of the products of this union may be a pleasant surprise for grognards. Turns out Hasbro actually wants to *expand* the market share for wargames, and it certainly has the marketing resources to accomplish that feat. Don't expect anything earth-shaking at first, of course, since the company's strategy seems to be one of attracting newcomers rather than catering to a small core of veterans. Well, hell — if the genre is to survive, let alone grow, that seems reasonable to me. I'm adopting a wait-and-see attitude, but I'm far more encouraged. I think it would be kinda neat see a PC conversion of *Tactics II*....



In response to complaints from alarmed fans, Talonsoft has reversed its decision to abandon the Battleground series.

Battleground Lives

Great news! After a lot of soul-searching and budgetary discussions, TalonSoft has decided *not* to scrap its legendary Battleground series. Evidently, the series had a bigger fan base than TalonSoft realized — and, boy, were those fans pissed when they heard the series had been discontinued. Anyway, it's back, with a lavish recreation of the Battle of Chickamauga — the only really important Civil War victory ever scored by Braxton Bragg, arguably the poorest tactician in the Confederate Army (supposedly Jefferson Davis favored Bragg over the infinitely more capable Joe Johnston because Johnston stole a girlfriend from Davis when they were both cadets at West Point. Could this guy hold a grudge, or what?)

Fans of the series will be delighted to know that *at last* TalonSoft had added a scenario editor and thoroughly overhauled the game engine. Because the Battleground series has proven only modestly profitable, however, there are no plans at present to market *Chickamauga* in retail stores. You want it, you gotta make a little effort: order by phone (410) 933-9191 or visit TalonSoft's web site (*www.talonsoft.com*) and pull out your VISA card.



William R. Trotter

Spring has sprung, and it's time for the General to clean out his desk and see what tidbits he can turn up.

Operation Art of War

Not-so-good-news: Just after *PCG* named *Operational Art of War* best wargame of 1998 comes word of a grognard backlash against the game. The Internet is full of complaints and accusations that neither TalonSoft nor Norm Koger bothered to patch some of the game's problems before publishing the *Battle Pack I* expansion disc.

Two experienced gamers with a lot of time on their hands, having spent months going over the game with a fine-tooth comb, have posted a 4,000-word essay detailing what they see as Koger's sins (generally concerning inaccuracies in the handling of weapons, logistics, air support, etc.) and claiming that he's done nothing to correct them. You can find their screed from at *www.wargamer.com*.



It's still a fantastic wargame, but a couple of diligent grognards have uncovered some inaccuracies in Norm Koger's *The Operational Art of War*.

The document is an eye-opener, and whether or not you care about the details it brings up, it's interesting to see the debate it has stirred up. The authors claim Koger has ignored numerous complaints, and that the expansion set doesn't fix anything. That just doesn't sound like the friendly, customer-sensitive Koger that I know, but I can certainly understand his not wanting to get caught up in an extended Internet flame-war. I asked Koger for his take on the controversy, and he expressed genuine puzzlement and sent me a list of at least a dozen major and minor changes he's made since the game was released. Certainly a few patches have been released, and the latest version (v1.06 as we go to press) can be had without buying the expansion pack (again at *www.wargamer.com*).

E-mail Dispatches

To end on a positive note, reader Sean Emerson (*www.transport.com/~semerson.html*) has created a program that lets you convert *any* Avalon Hill board game to a Play-By-E-Mail format. It's well work checking out.

And that's about it for this year. I've uncovered enough of my desk's surface that I can set down a beer without fear of spilling, so my work here is done.

PCG

The Cost of Admission

Let me say this first, so you know where I'm coming from: Back in 1993, I played Origin's *Strike Commander* on a PC with a 33MHz 386 processor. I cranked the graphics options all the way up.

Okay, if you weren't gaming six years ago, you probably *don't* know where I'm coming from. Let me put it this way: Like so many Origin games at the time, *Strike Commander* was, shall we say, on the cutting edge of hardware requirements. My 386 was still a pretty fast machine back then, but it wasn't nearly fast enough to play the game the way it was meant to be played.

Talk about choppy...I was probably getting 10 frames per second. But I was by-God determined to play the game I saw when I looked at the screen shots on the *Strike Commander* box in the software store. No compromises, even if it meant having to consult a crystal ball to predict where the enemy would be next time the screen updated.

I played the whole game that way. So when you read the following, don't assume I'm one of these guys who calls a game "choppy" just because he doesn't get a steady 60 frames per second. I know choppy animation when I see it, and I'm pretty forgiving.

But it's getting harder every year to tell what kind of experience you're going to get when you take a game home. The minimum hardware requirements listed on the game's box won't do you any good. They're not written by the game's designers; they're written by marketing people who want you to buy the game and don't particularly care if you have fun with it once you've spent your money. They're more interested in maximizing a game's potential audience by making sure the game's box says it'll run on the kind of PC most gamers have; never mind that the game may be virtually unplayable on that minimum spec. And the problem is worse for us sim fans, since simulations are generally on the cutting edge in terms of technology.

MicroProse's *Falcon 4.0* is a good example. I've had tons of fun blowing stuff up in that sim, but if I'd tried to play it on a machine that only met the game's minimum hardware requirements (a 166MHz Pentium with 32MB RAM and no 3D accelerator), I probably would've deleted it from my hard drive after about ten minutes. That's why I recommended a 300MHz Pentium II with 64MB RAM and a 3D card in March 1999's review of *Falcon 4.0*. (And this kind of discrepancy between a game's claimed hardware requirements and its real-world requirements is why we've included the "We Recommend" section in the information box of every game review we've ever run.)

To be fair, *Falcon 4.0*'s packaging includes a list of "Recommended" hardware, too — a 266MHz Pentium II with 64MB and a 3D accelerator. But based on my experiences with the sim, that configuration probably should appear under the "Minimum" heading. In fact, it's become common practice to include both "Minimum" and "Recommended" requirements on a game box, and it's a good rule of thumb these days to take the "Recommended" hardware as the game's actual minimum if you want to get a good experience out of it — and if you want the graphics to look anything like the screen shots on the box.

(Interestingly, *Falcon 4.0* takes this trend to the next logical level — or the next absurd level, depending on your point of view. In addition to the "Required" and "Recommended" categories, the *Falcon 4.0* packaging adds a third hardware spec. Under the heading "Really Hot!", it suggests a 450MHz Pentium II, 128MB RAM, and a 3D accelerator with 8MB or more of texture memory. Well, no kidding — that's a pretty good description of the hottest gaming machine you could get when *Falcon 4.0* was released; I'd *expect* it to be "Really Hot!" on a machine like that.)

There are occasional exceptions to the rule; another MicroProse game, *European Air War*, calls for a minimum of a 133MHz Pentium with 32MB RAM and a 3D accelerator. I've played it on a P166 with 32MB RAM and a first-generation 3Dfx Voodoo Graphics card — and with just a few tweaks to reduce the graphic detail, it ran surprisingly smoothly, even with 20-plus planes in the air. So I can see how *EAW* could actually be playable on the minimum system.

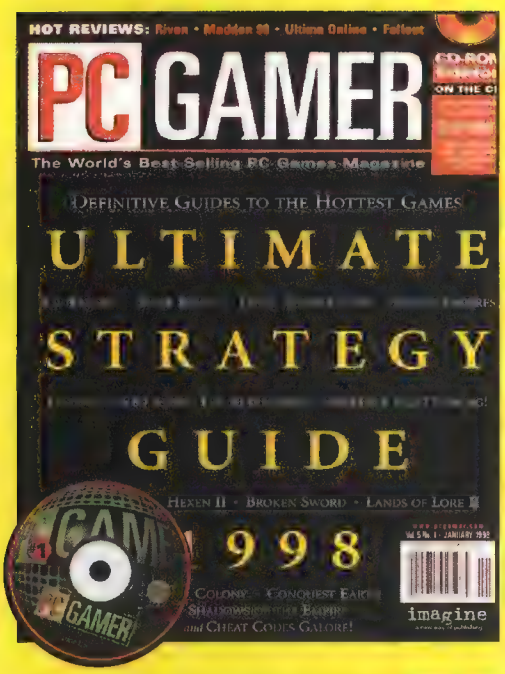
But it's definitely in the minority. Looking at the sims on my shelf, I see a lot of examples of minimum hardware requirements that are pretty questionable, to put it charitably. In addition to *Falcon 4.0*, there's Jane's *WWII Fighters*. It lists a 200MHz Pentium as a minimum on the box, but we've found you need something like a 400MHz Pentium II to play it with the graphics cranked up to match those in the ads. Jane's *F-15* claims a minimum of a P133 and 16MB RAM, but a 300MHz Pentium II and 32MB RAM are the real minimum if you want smooth flight at the highest graphic settings. And there are three more recent examples for each of those.

Gripe, gripe, gripe. So what can we do about it? Stop getting suckered in by unrealistic box copy, that's what. Start assuming that when a box says "Recommended," it really means "Minimum," and when it says "Minimum," it means "Forget About It." Read the review before you buy the game, and see what people who've played it say about its real hardware requirements. Let the game buyer beware, and let the publishers be aware we're onto their game.

PCG



The hardware requirements listed on a game box are becoming more meaningless every year — so how can you tell how well a new game will work on your PC?







SAVE 69%!



☑ YES! Send me 12 issues and 12 CD-ROMs of PC Gamer for $29.95—a savings of 69% OFF the newsstand price! With my paid order, I also receive The Extended Play Collection, Vol. 2 and the Best of the CD FREE!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

❑ Bill me ❑ Payment enclosed

Offer good in US only. Newsstand price per issue with disc is $7.99. Canada: $US 43.95 (includes GST). Foreign: $US 67.00. Prepaid in US funds. Please allow 6-8 weeks for mailing of first issue.

4PAJ8

Quake II, StarCraft, Age of Empires, and Doom II add-ons. Plus, the latest, greatest and most playable demos.

PC GAMER

SAVE 69%!



☑ YES! Send me 12 issues and 12 CD-ROMs of PC Gamer for $29.95—a savings of 69% OFF the newsstand price! With my paid order, I also receive The Extended Play Collection, Vol. 2 and the Best of the CD FREE!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

❑ Bill me ❑ Payment enclosed

Offer good in US only. Newsstand price per issue with disc is $7.99. Canada: $US 43.95 (includes GST). Foreign: $US 67.00. Prepaid in US funds. Please allow 6-8 weeks for mailing of first issue.

4PAJ8

Quake II, StarCraft, Age of Empires, and Doom II add-ons. Plus, the latest, greatest and most playable demos.

PC GAMER

SAVE 69%!



☑ YES! Send me 12 issues and 12 CD-ROMs of PC Gamer for $29.95—a savings of 69% OFF the newsstand price! With my paid order, I also receive The Extended Play Collection, Vol. 2 and the Best of the CD FREE!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

❑ Bill me ❑ Payment enclosed

Offer good in US only. Newsstand price per issue with disc is $7.99. Canada: $US 43.95 (includes GST). Foreign: $US 67.00. Prepaid in US funds. Please allow 6-8 weeks for mailing of first issue.

4PAJ8

Quake II, StarCraft, Age of Empires, and Doom II add-ons. Plus, the latest, greatest and most playable demos.

PC GAMER



NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED
STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 1149 BOULDER CO

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

PC GAMER
PO BOX 51199
BOULDER CO 80323-1199





NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED
STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 1149 BOULDER CO

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

PC GAMER
PO BOX 51199
BOULDER CO 80323-1199





NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED
STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO 1149 BOULDER CO

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

PC GAMER
PO BOX 51199
BOULDER CO 80323-1199

SAVE 69% OFF THE NEWS-STAND PRICE

Wear the monkey.



The Coconut Monkey Tee.

[JUST $14.95]

ORDER BY:

MAIL: Fill out this form and send it to: Intaglio, 1616 York St., San Francisco, CA 94110 **INTERNET:** *www.pcgamer.com* **PHONE:** (888) 468-1300 **FAX:** (415) 821-2099

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY, STATE, ZIP:

PHONE:



GUNMETAL BLUE:	SIZE L	QTY_____ x $14.95	= $_____.__
	SIZE XL	QTY_____ x $14.95	= $_____.__
COMBAT GREEN:	SIZE L	QTY_____ x $14.95	= $_____.__
	SIZE XL	QTY_____ x $14.95	= $_____.__
BLOOD RED:	SIZE L	QTY_____ x $14.95	= $_____.__
	SIZE XL	QTY_____ x $14.95	= $_____.__
CALIFORNIA residents add 8.5% sales tax			$_____.__
SHIPPING:	United States	add $5.00	= $_____.__
	Canada	add $7.50	= $_____.__
	International	add $15.00	= $_____.__
		TOTAL	= $_____.__

❑ **Check or money order made payable to "Intaglio" (Sorry, no CODs).**

❑ **Visa** ❑ **Mastercard** ❑ **AmEx**

Account number_____

Expiration date ___/___/___

(YOUR ACCOUNT WILL BE CHARGED BY INTAGLIO)

Signature_____

Orders must include payment. Products subject to availability and may change without notice. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. All checks must be in U.S. dollars and drawn on a U.S. bank account. PC Gamer is not responsible for any duties or taxes imposed by countries other than the U.S. during the delivery of international orders.

NOW AVAILABLE

To learn more about this title
Call Toll Free: 1-877-ALL-LOL3



TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #849

Westwood Studios
www.westwood.com

©1999 Electronic Arts. Westwood Studios and Lands of Lore are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts in the U.S. and/or other countries. Westwood Studios is an Electronic Arts™ company. 3Dfx ©1999 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. The 3Dfx Interactive logo is a trademark of 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. All rights reserved.

FROM THE CREATORS OF THE COMMAND

"...an **amazing**, captivating environment."
– Gamer's Republic

"**Dynamic** shadows and lighting make for a **splendid** atmosphere."
– Computer Games Online

"[Lands of Lore III] ...presents truly **ingenious** solutions to several issues that have plagued computerized RPGs for years."
– Games.net

"**...stunning** graphics and interface."
– Gamepower.com

"PC **role-playing** at its very best."
– PC Zone (UK)

LANDS OF LORE III



AVAILABLE NOW

& CONQUER UNIVERSE

STRATEGY CENTRAL

SOLUTIONS • TECHNIQUES • QUICK TIPS

It's been a good month here at Strategy Central, thanks to some great strategy tips for *Thief: The Dark Project*, *Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri*, and *Gangsters*.

This month also sees the return of our cheats page. If you have some great tips or cheats for the newest games, drop us a line! We love it when our readers show us how smart they are!

Let's Hear From You!

Write to:
PC Gamer Strategy, Imagine Media
150 North Hill Dr.,
Brisbane, CA 94005
or E-mail to:
peeceegee@aol.com
editor@pcgamer.com

Thief: The Dark Project, Part 2

Everything you need to finish the game!

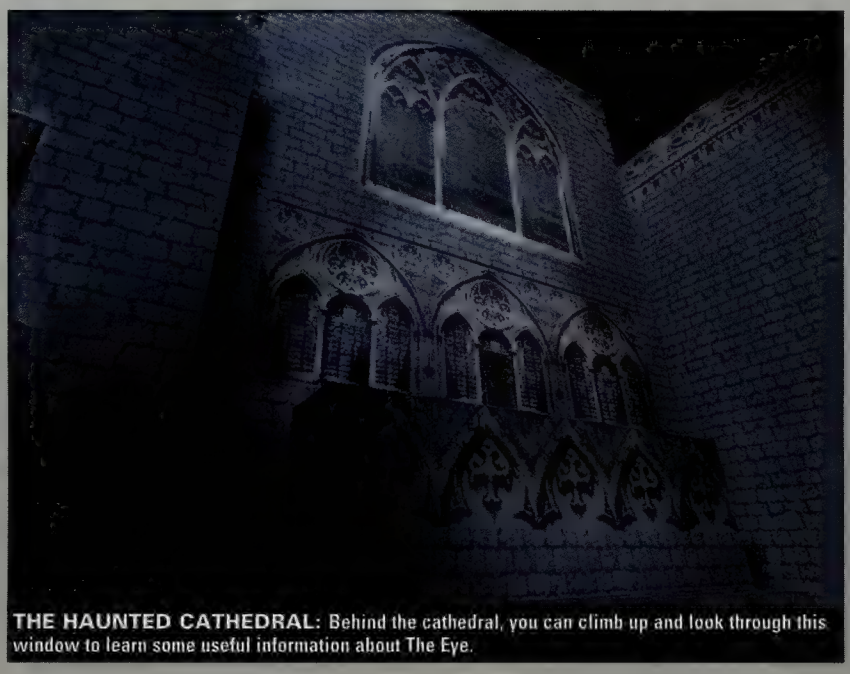
Last month's guide led you through the first five missions of Eidos' *Thief: The Dark Project*. Now, get ready for the spine-tingling conclusion, which will help you through the game's final, and toughest, missions....

The Haunted Cathedral

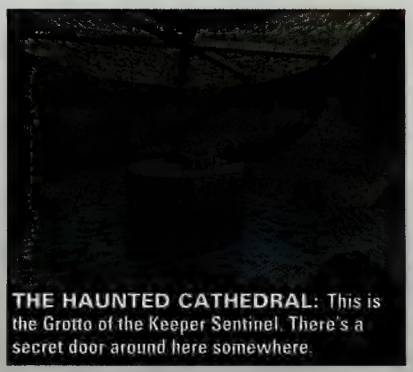
You start just inside the wall that separates the ruins from the rest of the city. The Eye is reputed to be inside the abandoned Hammer cathedral, so your first goal is to find that. Your map can be very helpful. The streets on the map are all in the game, and sometimes you can find the corresponding street signs. If you see the sign for a barber, a pub, or another shop, check your map for the icon that represents it. This can help you pinpoint your location in the ruins.

The ruins haven't been lived in for 50 years or more, so naturally the streetlights aren't on. There is a control panel inside the building to the left of where you start that controls the nearby lights. Every time you enter a dark part of the city, look around for a control panel to turn on the lights. Sometimes it takes a little exploration to find the switch. The public works icon on the map is a gear, and the light controls can usually be found there.

Only monsters and undead populate the ruins these days. Zombies mill around, and the burricks have carved tunnels below the city. Occasionally, you'll see a ghostly Hammer priest walking from one part of town to another. Keep in mind that avoidance works better than confrontation in most situations. There are plenty of dark corners in the ruins that you can hide in while monsters walk by. If you must fight, pick your weapons carefully and use surprise to its fullest advantage. If you come across a well-trafficked street, try leaving some mines in the road and watch the fun from cover. Snipe zombies and burricks with fire arrows from the second story of ruined buildings. Backstab the ghosts as they walk past your hiding spot, then corner them while lashing out with your sword until they disappear in a puff of smoke.



THE HAUNTED CATHEDRAL: Behind the cathedral, you can climb up and look through this window to learn some useful information about The Eye.



THE HAUNTED CATHEDRAL: This is the Grotto of the Keeper Sentinel. There's a secret door around here somewhere.

You have to find lots of loot to finish this mission, and power-ups don't hurt either. Search in places that are hard to get to — on top of rafters, inside ruined buildings, in chests and boxes found in abandoned shops, etc. Anytime you encounter a locked door, you can bet that something worthwhile is behind it, so break out your lockpicks and earn your keep.

When you finally arrive at the cathedral, it will be sealed. Take a right, go all the way to the back of the building, and climb up to the small window. From here you can peek inside the sanctuary and learn some interesting things about The Eye. To figure out what to do next, you'll have to locate the Grotto of the Keeper Sentinel and discover a secret passageway leading to an old Keeper chapel. All of the information

you need to finish the mission is inside that chapel, but watch out for traps. If you aren't sure what to do, check the objectives screen.

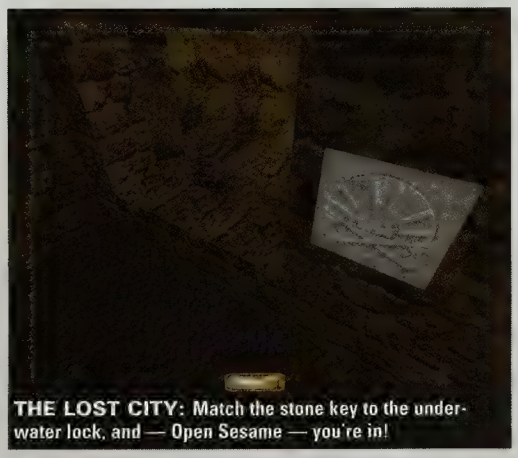
On Hard and Expert difficulty levels, you have to find some special items. The Serpentyle Torc is in a small mansion west of the drawbridge. The mansion can be hard to get into, so look for a house key in a place where many people hide them. You can flip the light switches inside the mansion to help avoid the haunts inside. The Watchman's Grave is in a courtyard off of Market Street. To get there, you'll have to climb to the top of a tower and make a dramatic leap to a nearby balcony. Good luck!

The Lost City

First, buy the tip about the mask collector. Without the tip, the masks are worthless. With it, you can not only turn a profit, but your loot goals will be easier to meet. To find the entrance to the Lost City, search underwater in the city river for a panel matching the stone key in your inventory. Use the key on the panel and a secret door will open.

In the library (the burrick-infested building with the automatic lights) you can hop down to the exit from the second-story windows and avoid most of the burricks. If your loot goal includes gems, you may have to go down to the library basement (which contains 150 gems in loot), but do it on your way out after you've had a chance to collect more ammo.

In the residential areas, avoid any patrolling burricks by ducking into buildings. If you can get up on the rooftops, you can jump from roof to roof where the burricks cannot get a clear shot. In fact, the sounds of combat might draw fire elementals from the nearby areas that will fight the burricks for you. Remember that the fire elementals are enemies of the other creatures in the Lost City, so the more you can avoid combat, the more chance there is of your enemies fighting each other instead of you! If you do have to fight the elementals, snipe at them with water arrows from the cover of darkness.



THE LOST CITY: Match the stone key to the underwater lock, and — Open Sesame — you're in!

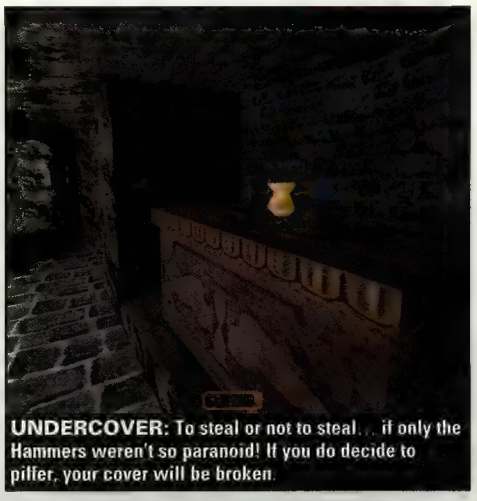
The talisman of water is in the king's tomb in the southeast. Go east from the civic building to the lava-flooded tombs. Hop across these tombs to reach the king's tomb. Once there, duck low after passing the lava-filled pit to avoid the spike trap in the ceiling. While you're here, you should also pick up the lever interred in the side room, since you'll need it later.

To get to the talisman of fire, you must pass through the arena (marked in the lower left of the map with a hand holding a spear). The map doesn't show it, but there's a tunnel connecting the central market area to the arena. Use the lever that you picked up on the mechanism here to extend the bridge across the lava. Do not try to jump across. Even if you make it, the jump the other way is even harder. If you do get stuck without the bridge, go to the tower with the fire talisman, get the speed potion, and use it to make the jump across the lava to the east of the tower.

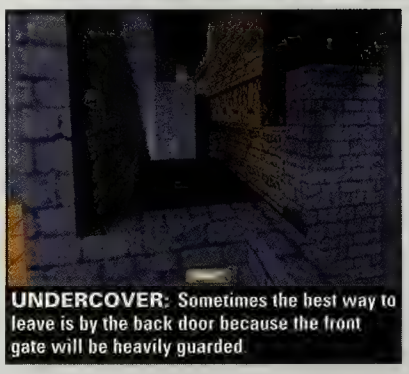


THE LOST CITY: The gems in the civic building are not just for show! Help yourself!

On the way to each talisman you will find a Keeper campsite, each with a medallion you must collect for the Hard difficulty objective. Taking the fire talisman attracts a lot of elementals, so conserve your water arrows for this part. Aside from having to watch for these critters, you just backtrack your way out to finish the mission.



UNDERCOVER: To steal or not to steal... if only the Hammers weren't so paranoid! If you do decide to pilfer, your cover will be broken.

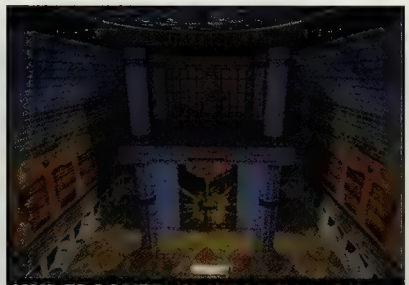


UNDERCOVER: Sometimes the best way to leave is by the back door because the front gate will be heavily guarded.

Undercover

Undercover gives you the chance to scope the target area out; use it! Walk all over the temple and watch the guardsmen patrol so you know how long a particular spot is out of their sight. Keep track of how many Hammers are patrolling in any given area. When something goes wrong and your cover is broken, you'll appreciate the knowledge.

Avoid breaking cover for as long as possible. Obviously, stealing loot or attacking one of the Hammerites will break your cover. Be careful while you are in the restricted areas because if you are spotted in them, you will be considered an enemy. You will also set off an alarm if you are seen going into



UNDERCOVER: So close, and yet so far; stealing the High Priest's hammer won't be as easy as this looks. Scope the area out first.

or out of the restricted areas.

In the library you'll find instructions on how to deactivate some of the Talismans' security systems. You can find a key to the library by going downstairs and entering the first right-hand door. You also need a copy of the Wallbuilder's Prayer. You can find a scroll with this on it in the right chapel off the main hall. Finally, you'll have to steal the High Priest's hammer from his quarters.

Locate all of the levers before flipping any of them. They are all in restricted areas, and you need to time the guard movements carefully to make the five-minute mark. Brother Mason is out in the graveyard. The old kitchen is now the new treasury, down in the temple's basement. The Inquisitor's rack is also in the basement. The skull of St. Yora is in the reliquary. Lastly, the keystone tree is in the center of the garden's back wall.

The Talismans are secured off the corridor behind the dining room. When you read the Wallbuilder's Prayer, an alarm will go off that alerts all of the Hammers. Once you've got the Talismans, don't try to go out through the front gate, because it will be well guarded; instead, try jumping over the wall of either the garden or the graveyard to make your escape cleanly.



RETURN TO THE CATHEDRAL: The Hammers have been investigating the night sky, and you can use their research to your advantage. Just stay quiet, and you won't be noticed.

Return to the Cathedral

For the first part of this mission, you are perfectly safe inside the cathedral as long as you are never seen nor heard. The undead that haunt the cathedral are all stationary or patrolling one small area. You should have no problem staying in the shadows, but be on the lookout for noisy tile floors. If you need to cross tile when an enemy is within earshot, deploy moss arrows first.

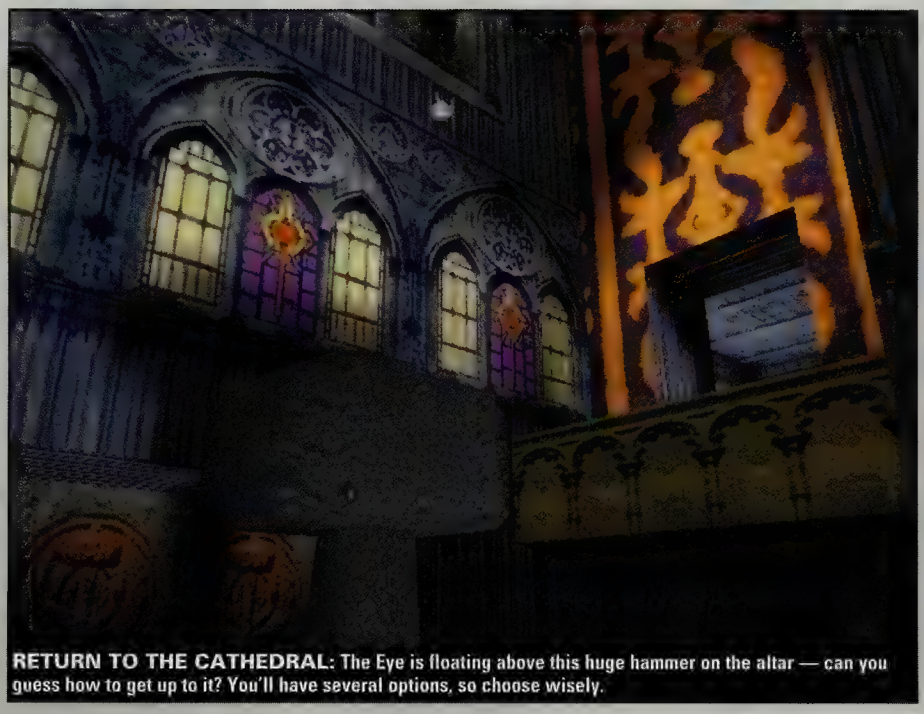
Take your time. Look around and figure out how to get The Eye. If you want to use any elevators, you'll have to flip the switch in the machine room in the cathedral basement. It's possible to get right up to The Eye without those pesky undead ever noticing; it's over a metal surface, but a moss arrow on the hammer will fix that problem. If the jump seems too tricky, look up for a place to use a rope arrow.

When you steal The Eye, it plays a nasty trick on you, causing all of the nearby undead to become very alert and start looking around for you. One strategy to deal with this problem is to blast the undead to small parts. If you're this type, make good use of flash bombs and take an occasional drink from the fountain near the altar to be healed. The stealthier tactic is to steal The Eye and quickly jump back to darkness and safety. The undead will all be looking for you, but eventually they will calm down and start wandering around, giving you a chance to sneak away from your hiding spot.

The other part of The Eye's trick is that the front doors are locked shut again. To get out, you'll have to visit the cloister behind the cathedral. You will meet a slightly deranged ghost named Brother Murus. Murus can help you escape, but first he wants you to do him the favor of putting his soul to rest. Most of the time he can be found near the entrance to the cloister at the bottom of the broken staircase. When you approach him, he will tell you the next thing he wants you to do.

You'll have to visit St. Yora's, St. Tennor's, and St. Vale's buildings to find items for Murus. You will also have to go to St. Jenel's to find the cemetery key and to imbue your holy symbol with magical energy. If walking around in the cloister seems too dangerous, try taking the elevators down to the winter tunnels. You can use these underground passageways as safe shortcuts between cloister buildings.

Eventually, you will have gone to the graveyard and consecrated Murus's



RETURN TO THE CATHEDRAL: The Eye is floating above this huge hammer on the altar — can you guess how to get up to it? You'll have several options, so choose wisely.



ESCAPE! This is the room that leads from the lair to the basement corridors. Make sure you stock up on equipment here.

grave for him. If you are playing on Hard or Expert, Murus has some other stuff for you to do; otherwise, he'll hand over a key to the armory, which is in the attic of the cathedral. After visiting the armory, you should finally be prepared to finish this mission.

Escape!

Right now you are probably pretty upset with Constantine. You did all the work retrieving The Eye, and he didn't pay you for it. Instead, you are weak, bleeding, and alone without equipment at the entrance to a nasty underground lair full of creepy beasts that want you dead. It's time to buck up and get the Hell out of there. If you want a head start on your revenge, you can look forward to leaving behind a pile of beast corpses.

Avoiding confrontations here can be very difficult. You may be better off if you think of yourself as a commando. Observe your enemies from a distance, and formulate a plan to take them out. Isolate them from each other, then ambush them when no one is looking. Proceeding this way, you can work slowly through enemy territory, taking risks only when you choose.

Fortunately, there are plenty of tools available to you in this mission. By looking carefully, you should be able to locate lots of water, fire, moss, and gas arrows. There is also purple fruit that has healing properties. Your stealthy arsenal of rope arrows, gas mines, etc., is around here, too. Use water arrows to provide cover of darkness. Use gas only when you will catch as many foes as possible inside the blast radius. Use fire arrows to put enemies down quickly, but be warned that the explosion is sure to attract other beasts. Don't underestimate your blackjack; when used with flash bombs, it can be your most powerful weapon.



STRANGE BEDFELLOWS: You have no arrows, and he's not using his anymore, so you might as well "borrow" them.

You must make your way through the lair to Constantine's basement and eventually back upstairs to his mansion. Your trip through the basement will be a lot easier if you stock up on equipment in the lair first. When you finally get to the mansion, it will look more or less familiar. The garden and most of the second floor of the house are blocked off by plant growth. However, the bottom floor has the same layout. You have two options: one is to force your way through the front door, which is only recommended if you came out of the basement with a sizable arsenal. The other option is to find the balcony you used to sneak into the mansion in The Sword mission. That exit is less guarded, but getting there requires more sneaking through the house.

If you are playing on Normal or Hard, you only have to get out of the house. If you are playing on Expert, you can find details about Constantine's ritual inside a giant tree protected by bug and frog beasts. This tree is near the spider tunnels at the beginning of the mission.



ESCAPE! Look in tree houses like this one to find your technological thieves' equipment.

Strange Bedfellows

As you head toward the Hammer temple to contact the High Priest, the scattered corpses and rubble spell trouble; the smashed front gate confirms it. Things that are even more hostile than Hammers are in the temple, and you start this mission without deadly ranged weapons; not even your trusty supply of broadhead arrows.

Battles leave debris and equipment; go into the temple and scour the barracks for a few more arrows. Open up the door across from the front gate carefully. It opens into the great hall, where a bugbeast and a spiderbeast are patrolling. The door to the left is jammed shut by rubble, so go right. Watch out for the tile floor — the temple is a very hard place to sneak in. Moss arrows come in useful here.

If you're playing on Expert, either take out this bugbeast or make a special effort to avoid fighting any bugbeasts on



STRANGE BEDFELLOWS: It's bad enough, having to talk to the Hammers... now you have to rescue them too? Don't alert the guards or they will kill the High Priest.

the level. If you fight any of them, you'll be required to kill them all. You may want to save your gas arrows to use on them, but if you do, be sure to kill them with your sword afterwards; knocking them out is not enough.

Loot the temple for equipment. Downstairs is patrolled, but there are healing potions, mines, and more arrows. Go down the stairs and turn left. The armory door on your left is locked but pickable. Some of the priests' quarters have a mine or a flash bomb in them. There are healing potions in the High Priest's quarters, but they are guarded by spiders. If you are playing on Hard or Expert, be warned that there is less equipment and more monsters.

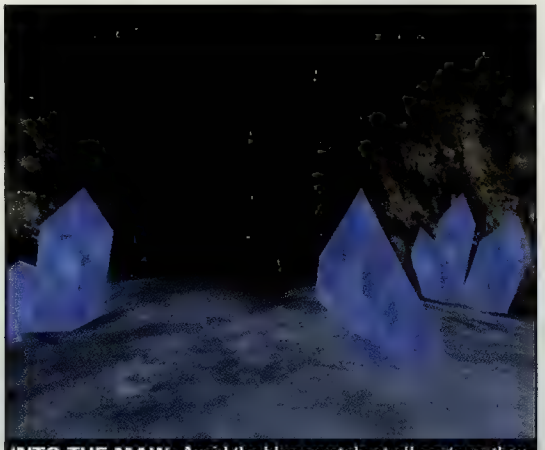
To find the Hammers, go to the Chapel. The left door is unlocked but requires crossing the hall; the right door can be picked. The altar is open, and a ladder leads downward into a cave complex. Listen carefully; Constantine's apebeasts patrol the area. If you are playing on Hard or Expert, you can find the Builder's Chisel in a spider lair in the southwest corner.

The ramp opens downward into the top level of a large cave. The Hammer door to your right can't be used yet, so keep descending. One level down there is a series of shrines: Earth, Fire, Water, and Air. Each of them has an arrow crystal, so they are worth visiting. An apebeast patrols the bridge; wait until his back is turned and cross the bridge using moss arrows. Go straight across and turn left at the far side. A set of stairs leads down to where you can speak to the Hammers in their last refuge. On Expert, be aware of the bugbeast in the pit.

Now you have the key to unlock the Hammerite door upstairs. The areas behind it are filled with creatures and shadows. Take advantage of the torches and nooks to sneak through this section. Don't be noisy, whatever you do. Watch out for the bugbeast in the center of the upper level.

Go left around the circle until you can go down again. Now you're on the bottom level. The High Priest is held in the room to your right, but if you alert his guards they will kill him. If you move slowly you can sneak all the way around, grab the Priest, and get out. The final bugbeast is on the way, in a center room.

Along the way, note another Hammer door in the wall. Your key will open it, and you must use it to get back to the Hammer refuge on Expert level. Remember, you're not done until the High Priest is at the river side of the Hammer refuge. If you are playing on Hard or Expert, the Builder's Chisel must also be at the same spot.



INTO THE MAW: Avoid the blue crystals at all costs as they will cause a lot of damage to you upon contact.

Into the Maw

Welcome to Constantine's realm. The Maw is filled with unique challenges, but for the most part, it is a straight path down. Keep going down until you find Constantine, and you can't go wrong.

At the top of the Maw, where you start, an endless stream of Constantine's creatures is headed up the path towards you. Don't try to fight them; instead, dodge into the purple caves along the Maw's upper section. These caves are off the beaten path and filled with gas crystals, which are always useful. By sneaking from cave to cave, you can reach the bottom without attracting any attention. A note for those playing on Expert level: save at least one of each type of arrow; you'll need them when you get to the bottom of the Maw.

Once you are past the lava-filled areas, you reach the ice slides. Blue crystals poke out of the walls and floor. Avoid them as the blue crystals do damage on contact. The ice, of course, is slippery and frictionless. Spend some time carefully sliding around the top of the first ice slide. There are a lot of water arrows here, and once you go down, you won't be able to return. There are explosive ice frogs at the bottom of the first slide and elementals at the bottom of the second. Look for fire crystals above the lava flows.

After the ice slides, you reach a big, blue cylinder beneath a lake on the ceiling. Ride the waterfall up, jump out at one of the breaks, and steer your way to the ceiling lake. Once you are there, center yourself above the blue cylinder and fall down into it.

When you reach the tree, get inside of it and climb up. The outside is guarded by a few apebeasts, but the spiders inside the tree are more dangerous. There are a few healing fruits and moss arrows in the interior as well.

Eventually you'll reach a cavern with a red gate like the one at the top of the Maw. Unless you're playing on Expert, you can ignore it. On each of its corners there is an anchor — Earth, Water, Air and Fire. Shoot at each one with the opposite type of elemental arrow to destroy the gate.

Continue down the path and climb over the rock in your way. Now you've reached Constantine's ritual room. Whatever you do, don't trigger a fight with him since you can't win it. Instead, sneak around the room to reach one of the overhanging ledges and put a rope arrow or two in the ceiling. Work your way across the ceiling until you are above The Eye, then shinny down and replace it. Once you've done that, all that's left is to wait and watch the fireworks.

PCG



INTO THE MAW: Don't confront Constantine; use your rope arrow to place The Eye back in its rightful place by hanging down from one of the ledges above.



EVICTION NOTICE
YOU ARE NOW ON MY LAND

*Feeling constrained by limited lands and resources in Europe, you've staked a claim in the New World. If the natives rebel, your next message will be pinned to their backs.

Ultimately, your goal is to become Europe's greatest power. To do this, you'll have to parlay New World resources into Old World dominance. Develop what you can, trade for the rest. Deploy spies to help stay ahead of the technology curve and build a formidable military.

And that arrogant queen who wouldn't acknowledge your land claim? It won't be long before she's serving you tea in the morning.



* Begin with global economic and diplomatic policies to gain power and prestige at home and abroad



* Fully exploit the New World on unlimited historically based and randomly generated maps



* Immerse yourself in tactical battles with an engine that enables greater player control

* The richness and depth of game play is reflected in 40 military and civilian units and 100 technologies from over 300 years of history (1500s-1800s)

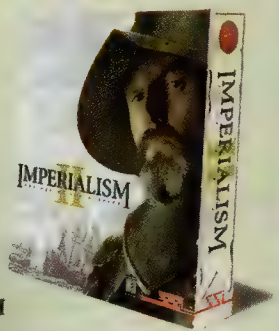
* Advanced artificial intelligence considers nation-specific personalities, strategies and diplomatic agendas

* High-resolution graphics set in an engrossing baroque style

* Intuitive interface and extensive game play tutorial makes it easy for first-time players to get up and running

* Go head-to-head against other world leaders in multi-player mode supporting up to 6 players

IMPERIALISM II
the age of exploration



WWW.IMPERIALISM2.COM

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #160



PLANESCAPE TORMENT & DESIGN: ©1999 Interplay Productions. All Rights Reserved. Bioware Infinity Engine ©1998 Bioware Corp. Portions ©1998 TSR, Inc. Torment, Planescape, the Planescape logo, Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, the AD&D logo, and the TSR logo are trademarks of TSR, Inc., a subsidiary of Wizards of the Coast, Inc., and are used by Interplay under license. All Rights Reserved. Interplay, the Interplay logo, Black Isle Studios and the Black Isle Studios logo, and "By Gamers For Gamers." are trademarks of Interplay Entertainment Corp. All Rights Reserved. Bioware Infinity Engine and the BioWare logo are trademarks of Bioware Corp. All Rights Reserved. Windows©95 and Windows©98 are registered trademarks of Microsoft Corporation. All Rights Reserved. All other trademarks and copyrights are property of their respective owners.

The Next Epic RPG from Black Isle Studios, the Producers of Baldur's Gate™ and Fallout™2

PLANESCAPE™ TORMENT™

Welcome to Sigil, the "City of Doors," a place with gates that lead anywhere in existence, provided you have the proper key. It is a neutral ground and watering hole for races across the multiverse, all under the watchful shadow of the Lady of Pain, the enigmatic ruler of the city. It is a place where the word is mightier than the sword, where thought defines reality, where belief has the power to reshape worlds and change the laws of physics.



Character creation is just the beginning - throughout the game your character adapts to fit your own personal gaming style.



The Planescape universe is a setting you've NEVER experienced before, filled with sharp-edged visuals, bizarre adversaries, and strange magics.



Encounter inventory items with personalities. Manage an unpredictable party of the strangest allies to walk the faces of alternate planes.



You can regenerate, speak with the dead, and have magical immunities. You're a power to be RECKONED with. Unfortunately, so is everyone else.

www.planescape-torment.com

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #530

Sid Meier's Alpha Centauri, Part 2

Advanced faction strategies from the game's producers!

In last month's strategy guide, we examined the basic imperatives necessary for Planetary domination: Explore, Discover, Build, and Conquer. This month, we'll take an in-depth look at the seven factions that vie for control of the Planet — their strengths, weaknesses, and the essential tools each leader needs to assert their philosophy on the new world.

Your First Decision: Maximize your strengths or focus on other priorities?

Every faction has certain strengths and weaknesses related to the culture of that faction. These attributes influence the strategies a faction might choose to pursue and present you with a key decision early in the game: will you play to your strengths, or rely on them to stay even with other leaders so you can focus on more important priorities? For example, the University of Planet faction under Provost Zakharov receives a +2 Research bonus, but a –2 Probe rating. Zakharov can use his Research bonus in one of two ways: focus his efforts to achieve a decisive technological edge, or rely on the bonus to keep him on par with the other factions so he can concentrate on other, more pressing needs.

Your starting location largely governs your decision. If your University faction finds itself enveloped by aggressive enemies on a small continent, research must take a back seat to military units.

Gaia's Stepdaughters: Building a Strong Native Force

LEADER: Lady Deirdre Skye
ATTRIBUTES:
+1 PLANET
+2 EFFICIENCY
-1 MORALE
-1 POLICE
+1 Nutrients in fungus squares.
May not use Free Market economics.



Lady Deirdre, leader of the Gaians, can mount a sizable native force early in the game.

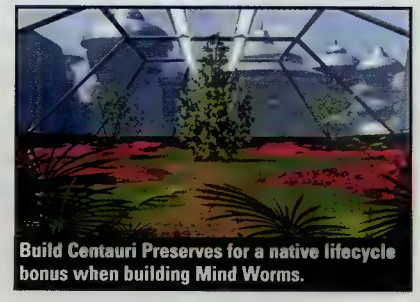
GAIAN STRENGTH: HUNT THE MIND WORMS

The Gaians possess one of the most fun powers in *Alpha Centauri*: a +1 Planet rating immediately following Planetfall. The Gaians can use this advantage to capture Mind Worms lurking in the Xenofungus and Unity Pods surrounding the base, providing them with an immature but numerous native force. A +1 Planet rating gives you a 25 percent base chance to capture a Worm, and a 10 percent bonus in any psi combat.

Undocumented feature: When playing as the Gaians, you can always capture the first Mind Worm you attack. Even when your capture attempt fails and normal combat results, a victory gives you energy credits harvested from the dead worms. Therefore, the Gaians should be out hunting Mind Worms as soon as they have explored their immediate surroundings. However, remember that psi combat depends on morale only, so be sure your explorers rate as disciplined or higher unless you are in the first few years after Planetfall, when weak Mind Worms abound.

Gaian players often overlook the fact that they can capture *any* native unit in the game, not just Mind Worms. Need a navy? Send out a transport and a Laser Foil. Use the transport to explore sea Unity Pods, picking up alien artifacts and other valuable units. Keep the Foil close by for the inevitable Isles of the Deep that periodically surface, and your navy will materialize in short order.

Undocumented feature: If you explore a sea Unity Pod with a combat ship or a full transport, the pod yields an Isle of the Deep more frequently. Reason: if you don't have an empty transport bay, the game rolls and re-rolls for the pod contents until you get something that does not need an empty bay — often, an Isle of the Deep. So if you need several Isles quickly, explore using combat units only and not transports. Normally, the transports pick up valuable alien artifacts, and should explore Unity Pods when possible.

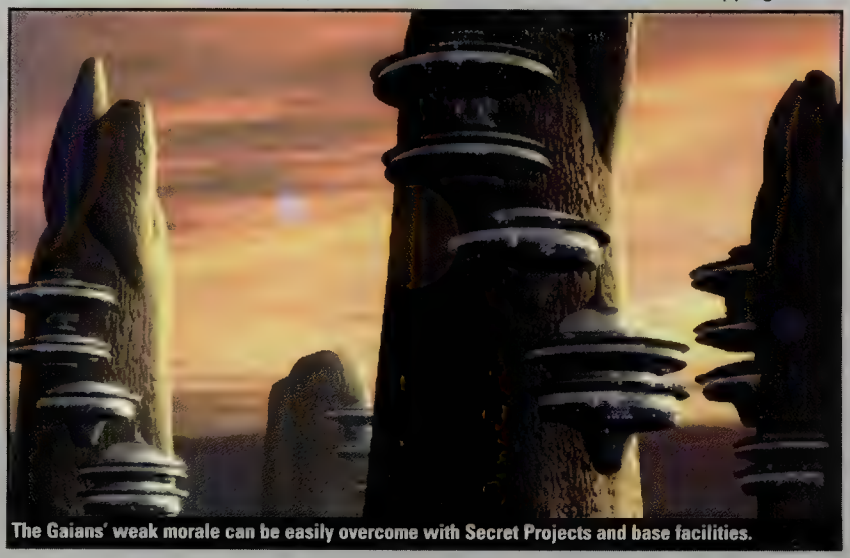


Build Centauri Preserves for a native lifecycle bonus when building Mind Worms.

MAXIMIZING NATIVE FORCES

When playing as the Gaians, you often should try to maximize the benefits of your Planet rating by building a strong native force. You possess several tools to accomplish this goal:

- The Xenoempathy Dome and Pholus Mutagen Secret Projects each confer a +1 lifecycle bonus on any native unit you build.
- Native units built in a base with a Biology Lab, Centauri Preserve, or Temple of Planet receive a +1 lifecycle bonus. This bonus is cumulative; if a base has all three of these improvements, a native unit will begin as a formidable Mature Boil. Add the above Secret Projects to the mix, and you could be instantly producing the awe-inspiring Demon Boils.
- Two more Secret Projects can make your native units virtually unbeatable: The Dream Twister (+50 percent to psi attack) and The Neural Amplifier (+50 percent to psi defense).
- Choose the 'Green' Economy model from the Social Engineering Screen, available with the discovery of Centauri Empathy (E3). This moves your Planet rating to +3, giving you a 75 percent chance to capture native forms and a whopping 30



The Gaians' weak morale can be easily overcome with Secret Projects and base facilities.



Yang's fondness for underground bunkers means you can spend fewer resources building defensive units early in the game.

percent bonus in psi combat.
- Be sure to upgrade your native units using monoliths. Since psi combat depends only on lifecycle/morale status, it is imperative that your Mind Worms be as advanced as possible before joining battle.
- Stick to the fungus. Any native unit gets a combat bonus when in Xenofungus, unless the other participant is also a native unit, and Mind Worms also use the fungus as roads.
- Remember that native units don't get a 'hasty assault' penalty when attacking with partial movement points. Even if you're down to 1/3 of a movement point, charge away!
- Don't rely solely on native units. Once an enemy wises up to your native force, they may send anti-psi units equipped with some nasty special abilities: Empath Song (+50 percent to psi attack) and Hypnotic Trance (+50 percent to psi defense). Keep some conventional units on hand to deal with these guys.

GAIAN WEAKNESS: MORALE

Your most serious problem as the Gaians comes from a –1 Morale modifier, applied to conventional (non-native) units. Early in the game, particularly if you haven't captured that first Mind Worm, the Gaians often prove easy pickings for the Spartans, Believers or some other faction with military muscle. Fortunately, the world of *Alpha Centauri* offers many solutions to this problem:

- The Command Nexus, Cyborg Factory, and Maritime Control Center Secret Projects all increase unit morale.
- These base facilities also increase unit morale: Command Center (land units), Aerospace Complex (air units), Naval Yard (naval units), and Bioenhancement Center (ALL unit types).
- Several socioeconomic choices also increase morale, including the Fundamentalist, Power, and Thought Control choices.
- Monoliths can upgrade your units.
- Build units with the High Morale special ability.

The Human Hive: Population Growth and Production

LEADER: Chairman Sheng-Ji Yang
ATTRIBUTES:
+1 GROWTH
+1 INDUSTRY
-2 ECONOMY
Free PERIMETER DEFENSE at each base.
May not use Democratic politics.



Chairman Yang's Human Hive powers give him an early advantage that can be difficult to overcome.

HIVE STRENGTH: NUMBERS...AND THE PERIMETER DEFENSE DOESN'T HURT

Given its +1 Growth bonus, the Hive can jump out to an early lead in population. Since population strength governs the amount of resources produced, the Hive can quickly build up a solid infrastructure. Add the +1 Industry to the mix, which decreases mineral costs by 10 percent, and you have a faction that often wins the race to build the first Secret Project on Planet.

Additionally, the free Perimeter Defense in every base means you don't have to build a lot of strong defensive units early in the game. So again, more resources can go toward infrastructure improvements and empire expansion. All these advantages imply that the Hive should try to build new colonies as quickly as possible. Experienced Hive players often build nothing but colony pods for the first 50 turns or so except in the Headquarters base, which works on Secret Projects.

Undocumented feature: Any bases conquered by the Hive also get a free Perimeter Defense, not just new bases built from colony pods. This certainly helps to hold off a counterattack, but if you immediately lose the base, you've just given your opponent a free defensive facility, making it that much harder to retake. Don't conquer a base unless you feel certain you can hold on to it.

You can maximize your growth strategy in the following ways:

- Build The Weather Paradigm as soon as possible. This Secret Project decreases the time it takes to build enhancements in a square by 50 percent, a benefit that proves useful in two ways. First, you can build farms and mines quickly, enabling you to grow your population and its productive capacity even faster. Second, you don't have to build as many Former units, freeing up resources for other construction priorities.
- Two Secret Projects really maximize your growth potential: The Planetary Transit System, which causes all new bases to start at size three, and the Cloning Vats, which causes a population boom at all your bases. Additionally, the Children's Creche and Sky Hydroponics Lab base facilities improve your growth rate.
- The Planned and Eudaimonic social engineering choices also improve your growth rate. With version two and higher of the game, the Hive suffers no negative efficiency from any social choice, so there's no downside to a Planned Economy.
- Discover Gene Splicing (B3) as soon as possible, so you remove the nutrient production restrictions that keep you from harvesting more than

two nutrients from a square each turn.

HIVE WEAKNESS: LOW EFFICIENCY
The Hive suffers from a low Economy rating — its only real weakness. You can overcome this weakness by increasing the amount of energy collected by your workers. Any of the following methods can offset the low Economy rating:

- Build more solar collectors, particularly on rivers or at high altitudes. If you have the Weather Paradigm, you can quickly implement this method of increasing your energy. Be sure to discover Environmental Economics (B5) so you can collect more than two energy per square each turn.
- Build the Merchant Exchange Secret Project (+1 energy in every square in a base). Also, the Recycling Tanks and Orbital Power Transmitter base facilities help offset a low Economy rating.
- Increase your Economy through the following social engineering choices: Free Market, Wealth, and Eudaimonic.

University of Planet: Technology

LEADER: Provost Zakharov
ATTRIBUTES:
+2 RESEARCH
-2 PROBE
Free NETWORK NODE at every base.
One BONUS TECH at beginning of game.
Extra DRONE for every four citizens.
May not use Fundamentalist Politics.


Provost Zakharov of the University is the head of one of the more straightforward factions in *Alpha Centauri.*

UNIVERSITY STRENGTH: TECH, TECH, TECH
From the +2 Research bonus to the free breakthrough and automatic network node in every base, the University is a technophile's dream faction. You can pursue a number of strategies to capitalize on your tech advantage.

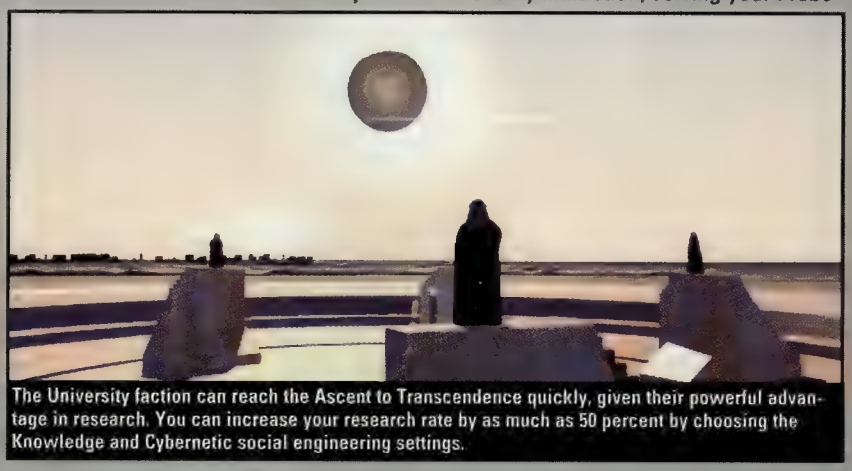
- Seek out Unity Pods for their alien artifacts. Alien artifacts have exceptional value to Zakharov, since the University possess a Network Node in every base. In most cases, you can immediately link any artifacts to a Net Node for a bonus advanced tech.

Undocumented feature: When linked to a Network Node, alien artifacts provide you with a technology for which you have only *one* prerequisite; all other bonus techs in the game come from techs for which you have *both* prereqs. Obviously, the more artifact techs you can acquire, the further you can jump ahead in the research race.

- Build the Merchant Exchange and the Supercollider Secret Projects in the same base. Many players think of the Merchant Exchange as a Morganite Secret Project, but the Exchange is invaluable for anyone pursuing a tech game because it increases the amount of energy produced. When you build the Supercollider (+100 percent Labs) in the same base, the bonus to your research is greatly increased. Build the Theory of Everything for another 100 percent Labs bonus in the same base and watch your Labs production go through the roof.
- Other Secret Projects and base facilities that increase your research: The Universal Translator (two free techs), The Network Backbone (Labs bonus), Biology Lab, Fusion Lab, Quantum Lab, Research Hospital, and Nanohospital. Again, building the facilities in the same base as the Secret Projects mentioned above will have a stunning effect on your research.
- Add to your +2 Research by choosing the Knowledge and Cybernetic social engineering settings. You can increase your research rate by as much as 50 percent in this manner.
- Be sure to build plenty of solar collectors around your bases, since your research directly depends on the amount of energy harvested each turn.

UNIVERSITY WEAKNESSES: PROBE TEAMS AND DRONES
You can solve the University's weaknesses (a poor Probe rating and that pesky extra drone) with just a few steps.

- The Hunter-Seeker Algorithm renders all your bases and units immune to enemy infiltration, solving your Probe Team problems once and for all.
- The Virtual World is a must-have for the University. This Secret Project makes every Network Node do double duty as a Hologram Theater, offsetting many drone problems with two talents per base. The University with the Virtual World means that any new base founded by Zakharov receives both a free Net Node and a Hologram Theater, an unbeatable combination.
- The Human Genome Project, Longevity Vaccine, and Ascetic Virtues can also help with drones. And the Telepathic Matrix permanently gets rid of drone riots as well as increasing your probe rating, making it another Project tailor-made for the wise University leader.
- The Thought Control social engineering choice increases your probe rating, making your units and bases much less susceptible to enemy infiltration and more expensive to anyone trying to take control of them.


The University faction can reach the Ascent to Transcendence quickly, given their powerful advantage in research. You can increase your research rate by as much as 50 percent by choosing the Knowledge and Cybernetic social engineering settings.

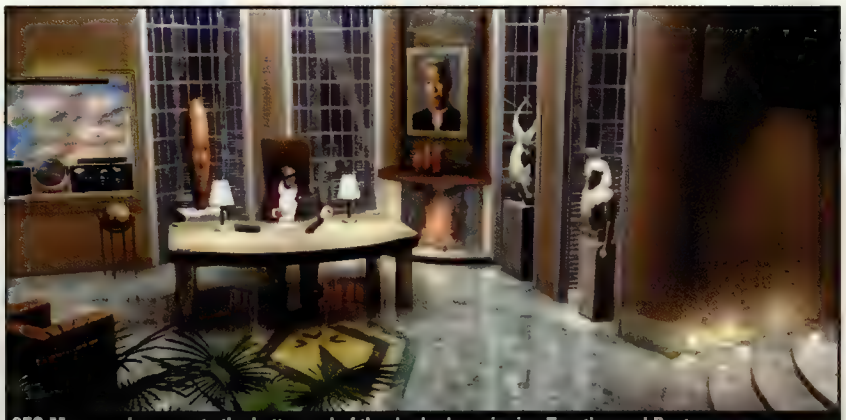
Morgan Industries: Economic Powerhouse

LEADER: CEO Nwabudike Morgan
ATTRIBUTES:
+1 ECONOMY
-1 SUPPORT
COMMERCE bonus
Need HAB COMPLEX for bases to exceed size 4.
May not use Planned Economics.


Morgan favors covert Probe Team operations as an alternative to the messy business of war.

MORGAN INDUSTRIES STRENGTH: IT'S THE ECONOMY, STUPID...
Morgan possesses one killer advantage — a +1 Economy rating. This generates one extra energy per base in the beginning of the game, so Morgan also benefits from quick expansion; the more bases he controls, the more extra energy he generates. He can capitalize on this advantage by building economic improvements and constructing a sizable force of Probe Teams. For Morgan, taking over a unit or base through probe team mind control often proves less hassle and expense than mounting a military expedition, so accumulating energy credits to finance these covert efforts becomes of paramount importance. And if Morgan generates enough credits, he can make a run at cornering the global energy market, cementing his role as the leader of humanity. Several strategies can help maximize Morgan's effort to become the richest man on the Planet.

- Build the Merchant Exchange. This Secret Project acts as the foundation of an economic strategy, since it generates one extra energy in every square worked by the controlling base. Try to build the Exchange in a


CEO Morgan always gets the better end of the deal when signing Treaties and Pacts.

base with lots of growth capacity; the higher the base population, the more extra energy the Exchange generates. The Self-Aware Colony (maintenance costs halved) also channels more energy to your reserves.

- Quite a number of base facilities are available that generate more energy or increase energy reserves, including the Energy Bank, Tree Farm, Hybrid Forest, Fusion Lab, Quantum Lab, and Orbital Power Transmitter.
- Use social engineering to increase your Economy rating. The Free Market and Wealth choices both help generate more energy in each base.
- Form as many Treaties and Pacts as practicable with other factions. The Morgans get a commerce bonus from these arrangements, so they invariably get the better end of the deal.
- Build the Hunter-Seeker Algorithm (making your bases and units immune to Probe Team infiltration) as a prophylactic measure: if someone else builds this Project first, you won't be able to use your Probe Teams against them. And remember that you'll have to field a conventional force at some point to deal with Miriam, since her fanatic beliefs, combined with her tendency to choose the "Fundamentalist" form of government, render Probe Teams ineffective when used against her.
- Construct plenty of solar collectors around your bases to harvest energy, and discover Environmental Economics (B5) as soon as possible to remove energy restrictions.

MORGAN WEAKNESSES: POPULATION LIMITS AND SUPPORT RATING

Fortunately for the Morgans, they can address their weaknesses (size four base population limit and a –1 support rating) by constructing certain Secret Projects. The Ascetic Virtues relaxes the population limit, while The Living Refinery grants a +2 support rating modifier. The only problem with this approach: the Living Refinery comes in the middle of the tech tree, with Advanced Spaceflight (D8). If you need to deal with support issues earlier in the game, build units with the Clean Reactor special ability, so they require no support. Clean Reactors require Bio-engineering (B5), which you can research earlier than Advanced Spaceflight.

Spartan Federation: Military Powerhouse

LEADER: Colonel Corazon Santiago
ATTRIBUTES:
+2 MORALE
+1 POLICE
-1 INDUSTRY
Prototype units do not cost extra minerals.
May not use Wealth value in Social Engineering.


Colonel Corazon Santiago's main strength is her military.

BUILDING A BETTER MILITARY

The Spartan's two main strengths, +2 Morale and +1 Police, both suggest a strategy based on a large military. Particularly in the years immediately following Planetfall, Santiago possess a decisive military advantage, since no other faction can build technologically advanced weaponry to counteract the Spartans' morale bonus. With just one or two Rovers from Unity Pods near your first base, you can usually dominate your immediate neighbors, perhaps even forcing an early surrender that will keep a faction in your back pocket for the duration of the game.

Undocumented feature: A faction that surrenders to you should never bother you again, unless you constantly abuse the relationship through Probe Team use or continual demands. Surrendered factions always vote for you in elections for Planetary Governor and Supreme Leader, and often prove valuable allies, providing you with tech and even units from time to time. Unless you have a special hatred for a given faction leader, you should always accept surrender offers.

Remember that given the Spartans' +1 Police rating, more combat units can function as police units, keeping the malcontent drones in check. As noted in the section addressing Gaian weaknesses, *Alpha Centauri* offers a number of methods for improving a military advantage.

- The Command Nexus, Cyborg Factory, and Maritime Control Center Secret Projects all increase unit morale. Independent of social engineering, if you possess both the Command Nexus and the Cyborg Factory as the Spartans, you can instantly produce elite ground units with a +1 bonus movement point.
- These base facilities also increase unit morale: Command Center (land units), Aerospace Complex (air units), Naval Yard (naval units), and Bioenhancement Center (ALL unit types).
- Several socioeconomic choices also increase morale, including the Fundamentalist, Power, and Thought Control choices.
- Monoliths can upgrade your units.
- Build units with the High Morale special ability.

KEEP DOWN THOSE MINERAL COSTS

The Spartan disadvantage, a –1 Industry rating that drives up mineral costs, can be addressed in a variety of ways. Fixing this problem should be a high priority for any Spartan player, or your production capacity won't be able to churn out enough of those shiny elite units to keep up with the other factions. Some methods of increasing your production:

- The Singularity Inductor and Bulk Matter Transmitter Secret Projects generate significantly higher quantities of minerals.
- Early in the game, build the Recycling


Several key Secret Projects and base facilities can help boost industrial production.

Tanks base facility for its extra mineral harvested each turn. Later in the game, several different facilities can increase your mineral output, including the Robotic Assembly Plant, Nanoreplicator, Quantum Converter, Genejack Factory, and the Nessus Mining Station.

- The Planned and Eudaimonic social choices increase your industry rating, lowering mineral costs to standard levels or better.

The Lord's Believers: Conquering Eden

LEADER: Sister Miriam Godwinson
ATTRIBUTES:
+25% Bonus when attacking enemies
+1 PROBE
+2 SUPPORT
-2 RESEARCH
-1 PLANET
Accumulates NO research points until MY 2110.
May not use Knowledge value in Social Engineering.


Sister Miriam: She may not look like much, but she's got brains and skills where it counts.

OFFENSIVE CAPABILITIES AND OTHER STRENGTHS

The Believers sport a wide variety of strengths and weaknesses, including a devastating 25 percent bonus when attacking enemies. This bonus dictates a simple strategy for Miriam: always attack whenever possible. Maximize this potential by building units with strong offensive capabilities, including a good mix of fast movers, slower infantry, and aircraft. You can enhance your military power further by following the steps outlined under the Spartan section "Building a Better Military," above.

Miriam's other strengths include a +1 Probe and a +2 Support. When the Believers choose the "Fundamentalist" form of government, the +1 Probe immunizes Miriam's bases and units from probe team subversion, a key advantage against economic powerhouses like the Morgan Conglomerate. Her +2 support means she starts the game able to support four units free in every base, once again reinforcing the importance of an offensive military.

WEAKNESSES: RESEARCH AND PLANET

The Believer's Achilles heel comes with their –2 Research. This weakness makes keeping up in the tech race very difficult. Miriam can implement several solutions to this problem, most described under the University section "Strength: Tech, Tech, Tech." Additionally, she can pursue some alternate solutions to her research stagnation:

- Make smart friends. Forging alliances with more technologically advanced factions, such as the University and the Morgans, often proves the easiest and fastest way to acquire research breakthroughs. If you start next to the University, you can even try to use your offensive bonus to force an early submission Pact so Zakharov can feed you techs throughout the game.
- Build The Planetary Datalinks Secret Project, which gives you access to any tech subsequently discovered by three other factions.


The Peacekeepers possess a strong incentive to reunify Planet diplomatically, ideally under their banner.

The Peacekeeping Forces: Diplomacy and Population Growth

LEADER: Peacekeeper Pravin Lal
ATTRIBUTES:
-1 EFFICIENCY
Extra TALENT for every four citizens.
May exceed HAB COMPLEX population requirements by two.
Receives DOUBLE votes in elections for Planetary Governor and Supreme Leader.
May not use Police State Politics.


Lal possesses an advantage in the most straightforward path to victory: the election to Supreme Leader.

MORE STRENGTH IN NUMBERS...

Lal's two best strengths, an extra Talent for every four citizens and the loosening of population limits before a Hab Complex is needed, give him an advantage in population growth. Simply put, the Peacekeepers can accommodate more citizens with a smaller infrastructure. Therefore, Lal's key strategy is to encourage population growth, using many of the same points described in the Hive section titled "Strength in numbers...."

...AND USE DIPLOMACY TO BECOME SUPREME LEADER

Lal's other advantage, double votes in elections for Planetary Governor and Supreme Leader, comes in most handy later in the game, when he can make a run for Supreme Leader and ultimate victory. Remember that your base voting power in elections depends on your population, so the growth strategies outlined above add considerably to your vote total. Additionally, the Empath Guild and Clinical Immortality both double your electoral votes. If you decide to run for Supreme Leader, plan to build both of these Secret Projects, since you require a 3/4 majority vote for success. In most cases, you require some kind of support from the other leaders, so work toward warm relations with as many factions as possible.

Undocumented feature: Factions that are at least two times as strong as the next most powerful faction tend to be regarded with suspicion by the other leaders. If you intend to run for Supreme Leader, consider cultivating friendships without growing quite so powerful, and you may have an easier time.

PCG


With their 25 percent offensive bonus, the Believers should attack whenever they can.

"Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun."
–Mao Tse-tung

ONCE IN A WHILE, YOU HAVE TO TAKE IT OUTSIDE THE U.N.

FORCE 21

2015: WWIII

choose sides

"There is nothing I love as much as a good fight."
–Franklin Delano Roosevelt



A real-time 3-D TACTICAL WARGAME as intense as RAINBOW SIX and war itself.

Red Storm ENTERTAINMENT

©1999 Red Storm Entertainment, Inc.

RATING PENDING RP ESRB

MSN Gaming ZONE PLAY IT ON ZONE.COM

FREE INTERNET GAME PLAY www.mplayer.com

www.redstorm.com

Mpath, Mpath Interactive, Mplayer, The Mplayer logo and Wanna Play are trademarks of Mpath Interactive, Inc. MSN Gaming Zone is either a registered trademark or a trademark of Microsoft Corporation in the United States and/or other countries.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #685



Introducing the first PC racing sim you don't need a physics degree to drive.

NASCAR revolution

Pick your car. One of 17 sanctioned, tread-shreddin' tracks. And the fastest line. Then crank over the conversation-killin' virtual V-8 and hit the banks with 43 of NASCAR's big dogs.

Download the demo now and drive the new revolution. ***www.NASCARrevolution.com***

Go to http://pcgamer.ign.com/request Product #900



It's a lap or be lapped world.



If it's in the game, it's in the game.™

EA SPORTS

NASCAR PC

EVERYONE E CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Software © 1999 Electronic Arts. 209 Redwood Shores Parkway, Redwood City, CA 94065. EA SPORTS, the EA SPORTS logo, and "If it's in the game, it's in the game" are trademarks or registered trademarks of Electronic Arts in the U.S. and/or other countries. NASCAR is a registered trademark of National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing, Inc. "Dale Earnhardt" name and likeness, and likeness of the #3 Richard Childress Racing car used under license from Dale Earnhardt, Inc. © 1999 license for driver, helmet, car and uniform granted by Dale Earnhardt, Inc. "Valvoline" trademarks, "Roush Racing" and "Mark Martin" name and/or likeness by authority of Roush Racing, Livonia MI. "Terry Labonte" name and likeness and "Kellogg's marks under license granted by Kellogg Company and Hendrick Motorsports. TM, © 1999 Kellogg Company. HOT WHEELS is a trademark owned by and used under license (with permission) from Mattel, Inc. © 1999 Mattel, Inc. STP ® Trademark used under license. Talladega Superspeedway and all associated logos are the property of International Speedway Corporation and used under license. All other car, team and driver images, track names, trademarks and other intellectual property are used under license from their respective owners. 3Dfx © 1999 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. The 3Dfx Interactive logo is a trademark of 3Dfx Interactive, Inc. All rights reserved.

Gangsters: Organized Crime

Breaking the law and getting away with it has never been easier!

Surviving your walk on the wrong side of the law in Eidos' *Gangsters: Organized Crime* requires a lot more than muscle and a quick trigger finger; only the best-prepared bosses can hope to make it to the top of the crime ladder. With the help of this guide you will soon be running your own successful empire.

The First Weeks

During the first weeks of the game, there are three priorities: making money, expanding your territory, and recruiting more hoods. The three items all link together; money pays for the hoods, the hoods extort new areas, and the new areas supply money to the player. The race for money, hoods, and land can have effects that last for a long time, so you need to make sure that you do not fall behind at an early stage.

Another option to consider is security. Although your opponents rarely attack at an early stage, it is almost certain that you will eventually see an enemy gangster walking near or through your area. Always keep some gangsters back for patrolling, or leave them behind in the office. With these goals in mind, you must set up your teams appropriately.

Setting Up Your Team

Putting the right people in the right teams is very important; the correct use of gangsters and their skills leads to a higher success rate. Good Lieutenants can organize the team more effectively, allowing more orders to be performed and sending the best people on each job.

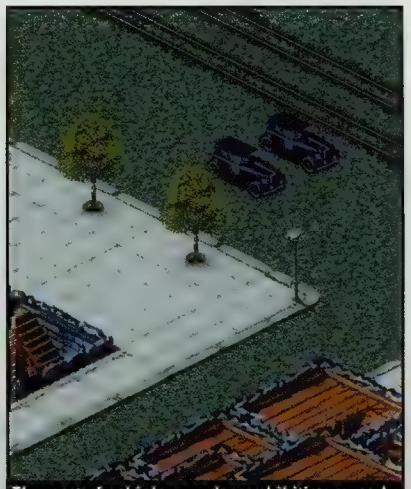
The Lieutenant for any team should always have high values of intelligence and organization, along with any skills relevant to the team's task. The Lieutenant of an extortion team must therefore have high ratings for intelligence, organization, and intimidation, while the hoods within the team must all possess at least four stars for intimidation.



Study the statistics of each of your gang members carefully; having the right man for the right job is crucial to your success in *Gangsters*.



It's always a good idea to keep a few of your men back to patrol the area around your headquarters to avoid ending up like this, even though it's rare that your enemies will attack in the early stages of the game.



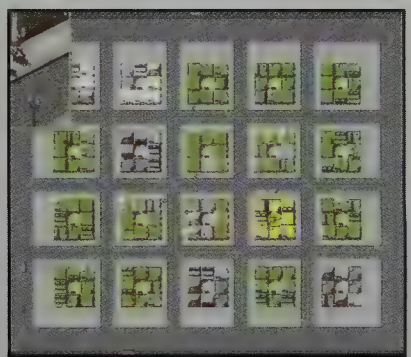
The cost of vehicles can be prohibitive, so only supply them to team members that will derive a great benefit from using them.

Therefore, to meet the need for money, expansion, recruitment, and security, you should look to build three teams. The extortion team contains good intimidators, the recruiting team contains gangsters with high ratings of intelligence, and the security team contains gangsters with good firearms and stealth ratings.

Equipping Your Hoods

You can give weapons and vehicles to any of your Lieutenants, but it is best to consider whether they actually need them. Only give weapons to teams involved in patrols and hit squads, and then, only to members of those teams with a firearm rating of at least four stars. These are the people who can look after themselves in a firefight and it is better to let your other hoods run away. This is most important if they are carrying several thousand dollars of protection money.

Buying vehicles for your gang members is more of a balance. Each vehicle costs money. Unless you have money to throw away, it is not worth giving vehicles to the team that collects protection money from two blocks away. Lieutenants will only use vehicles if they



In the early going, limit your activities to areas close to your headquarters, where your reputation has already preceded you.

think that they benefit from using them, so only give vehicles to patrols and teams that have to travel appreciable distances to complete their orders.

Giving the First Orders

The first orders that you should give are to extort, recruit, and patrol. When giving the extort order, always target the areas close to your office; these places will have heard about you, and will be much easier to control. When you recruit at the start of the game, always recruit from the Labor Exchange and the Docks; these contain more hoods than the pool halls and gyms, so your success rate will be higher. If the Labor Exchange and the Docks are a considerable distance from your office, give the recruiter a vehicle so that they can get there before anyone else. You can send the patrol to anywhere in your area, but try to avoid giving too large an area or your patrol may be a great distance away when you need them.

The Working Week

During the early stages of the game, any contact that occurs between your hoods and the gangsters from other gangs will be mostly coincidental. Most sightings will be around the buildings that offer hoods for recruitment, and combat will be very rare. Consider accelerating each week until you have reached a controlled area of 20 to 30 blocks, but keep an eye open for combat messages and act on these as necessary.

At the End of the Week

When the working week is over, always check that your teams are up to strength and that you are making money. Recruit every hood that is available; even the worst hood can collect protection money, and as your gang size grows, other hoods become easier to recruit.

When you have brought your teams up to strength, take a look at the City Maps. As the game progresses, the territory controlled by each gang expands. You will not normally be aware of this without exploring, but recruiting can help. If gangsters recruit from enemy controlled businesses, they will tell you that the enemy controls the block. This helps keep track of an opponent's expansion, and also produces hoods for hire.

Using these tactics, you will find yourself in a strong position after about five weeks. You will be making a profit each week, and you will be in charge of an area that is both secure and reasonably sized.

Later in the Game

As you progress through the game, contact between the gangs becomes more frequent. This is mostly due to the gang territories coming into close proximity with each other, forcing hoods to travel through rival areas to get to their destinations, and forcing the player to consider new avenues.



The bigger your organization, the easier it is to recruit more hoods. Recruiting from a rival-controlled business will also give you helpful information on your enemy.

The Accountant and the Lawyer

When you can afford one, recruit an accountant. The accountant helps distribute illegal money, which in turn avoids a visit from the FBI. Always recruit the best accountant that you can afford; an accountant with five stars can distribute much more money than one with three stars. A good lawyer is also necessary; the lawyer helps keep your gangsters out of prison, and keeps track of your criminal activities.

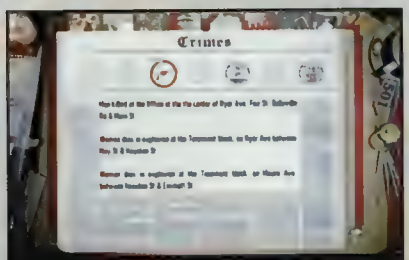
Buying Businesses

When you have the money, consider investing in new businesses. Always start by expanding your range of legal businesses; these have no attached risk of FBI raids and also allow you to hide more of your illegal income. Never let the ratio of illegal income to legal income exceed ten to one unless you have a good accountant, or the FBI will come looking for you.

When you are ready, consider setting up an illegal business. As with all other businesses, only establish an illegal business in an area where the value of the land is suitable for that type of business. Do not set up a casino in a poor area, and likewise avoid establishing prizefights in the wealthy parts of the city. Most of the illegal businesses make more money than a legal business would in the same area; casinos make more money than department stores, and speakeasies make far more than restaurants.

Speakeasies, counterfeit presses and extra offices are special types of illegal businesses. Speakeasies need a constant supply of liquor from a moonshine still, but offer huge profits in return. Counterfeit presses do not make any money themselves, but instead distribute large quantities of illegal money to your legal businesses, which in turn launder it to the public and consequently make increased profits. When you have extra offices, your hoods will always start a game week from the office closest to the destination of their first order.

Always remember to maintain the



As your list of crimes starts to grow, the authorities will take a greater interest in you. Having a good lawyer and accountant will get you out of a lot of tough spots.



Make sure you know the land value of an area before setting up a business. An affluent spot like this would be a good place to open a casino, but not the best spot for prizefights.



If you're running for office, a good strategy is to bomb a few businesses in your opponent's area to reduce his share of the vote. Also try committing crimes in his area so his popularity drops.



There are several ways of dealing with rival gangs; bombing their businesses and offices can be costly, but oh so much fun! You can also kidnap rival gang members to find the enemy base.

balance between legal money and illegal money; if you lose your accountant or several legal businesses, your suspicion will soar.

Dealing with the Law

It is inevitable that your hoods will break the law, so knowing how to deal with the police and the FBI is very important.

The police patrol the city every week, looking for crimes and investigating those previously committed. If the police arrest one of your hoods, try getting the lawyer to bribe the DA. This will give you the names of the witnesses and jurors; you can bribe or intimidate these people until they cooperate, or kill them if they refuse. If this does not work, try bribing the judge. There are lots of ways to get people out of trouble; it all depends on how much time and money you want to spend on the gang member.

The FBI investigates illegal business activities and money laundering. If you spot a lone agent in your area, it means that the FBI is suspicious of you and the agents are trying to find your illegal businesses. At this stage, you have the option of ignoring or killing the agent, or closing down any illegal businesses in the area. If you spot a car full of agents in your area, it means that a raid is occurring. There is little that you can do about this except for either killing the agents or allowing them to raid the site and dealing with the DA and judge at a later stage.

Entering the Elections

If you decide to enter an election, you will need a lawyer, plenty of territory, and plenty of money. Try reducing the amount of protection money that you collect each week; this improves the happiness of the storeowners, which results in more votes for you.

Setting up a Teamster building behind one of the Trade Union businesses allows you to gain a share of the industrial vote, even if you do not control any industrial businesses. This can result in a vote swing of up to 10 percent in your favor.

If another gang leader enters the election, try committing crimes in their area. Bombing businesses in another gang leader's area makes the population more hostile towards their protector, reducing that gang leader's share of the vote.

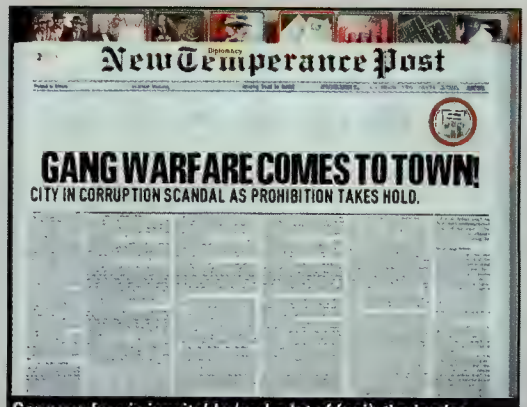
Dealing with the Other Gangs

Unless you go straight or run for office, you will eventually have to take on the other gangs. The first thing that you will need to do is to find their offices. If you decide to explore areas, try to narrow down their position by using the newspaper and the recent events overlay in the City Maps. Large numbers of deaths can mark the border of two warring gangs, and bomb attacks can indicate enemy-owned businesses, so try working out where the office could be from these clues. When you explore, send as many people as possible to an area. Do not explore individual blocks; it is far better to search large areas in one go.

Kidnapping hoods is another way to find the enemy base. To successfully kidnap an enemy hood requires first-class hoods, with high ratings in intelligence, organization, intimidation and stealth. A high rating in firearms is also necessary, as your hoods will have to travel into enemy territory. The successful interrogation of enemy hoods yields a list of enemy-owned businesses. Investigate these sites, along with the area between them.

When you have located the enemy office, decide your next course of action. Killing enemy gang leaders is one option, but can be costly in terms of hoods and lost weapons and vehicles. Destroying a gang's legal businesses is another option; this drives up their leader's suspicion and can result in their arrest. If you decide to kill the gang leader, send every hood that you can spare and hit them hard.

PCG



Gang warfare is inevitable (and a lot of fun!); the leader with the deepest pockets and the best lawyers and accountants is sure to come out victorious.

Cheater's Corner

Our cheatin' hearts...

The bad boys of PC gaming are back to bring you the latest cheat codes for your favorite games! We've got the goods to help you out of the toughest spots, and even if you've already beaten these games into submission, you can load 'em up again and check out all the cool stuff that the programmers *didn't want you to see.*

SIMCITY 3000

As you're playing the game, hit the [CTRL] + [ALT] + [SHIFT] + C keys simultaneously. A box with a flashing cursor will appear. Type one of the following and press enter to activate:

PAY TRIBUTE TO YOUR KING
Gives you all the extra gifts.

POWER TO THE MASSES
Gives you access to all power plants regardless of the date.

WATER IN THE DESERT
Gives you access to all water plants regardless of the date.

NERDZ ROOL
Turns your industries high-tech.

STOP FORCING ADVICE
Turns off your advisors.

I AM WEAK
Construction costs are set to $0.

CALL COUSIN VINNIE
$250,000 donation offer.

ZYXWVU
Gives you the SimCastle structure if you turned down Vinnie's offer.

SALT OFF
Turns the seas into fresh water.

SALT ON
Turns the seas back to salt water.

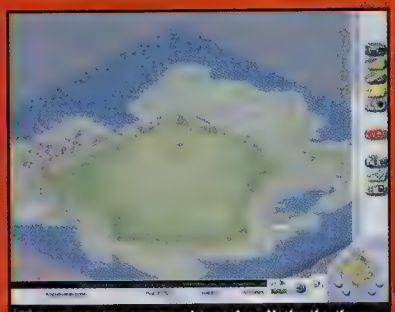
TERRAIN ONE UP
Raises the selected terrain by one.

TERRAIN ONE DOWN
Lowers the selected terrain by one.

TERRAIN TEN UP
Raises the selected terrain by 10.

TERRAIN TEN DOWN
Lowers the selected terrain by 10.

LET'S MAKE A DEAL
Neighbors will start trying to make deals with you if you are connected to them in some way (power, water, roads).



Water, water, everywhere, but little that's good to drink. Remedy this problem by using the "salt off" cheat to turn the ocean into a source of fresh water.

HALF-LIFE

When you start the game, go to the start menu in Windows, select 'Run', and type c:\Sierra\Half-Life\hl.exe -console (assuming this is where you installed the game). When the game starts, press the ~ to display the console and type sv_cheats 1 to enable the cheat mode. You will now need to reload a saved game. Once the game is loaded, open the console again (with the ~ key) and type one of the following:

/GOD God mode.
/IMPULSE 101 ... Gives you all weapons with full ammunition.
/NOCLIP Allows you to walk through walls, floors, and ceilings.

DETHKARZ

At the main menu, type one of the following:

ITSASMALLWORLD
Gives you all cars.

KOOLNU
Gives you all of the tracks.

TEST DRIVE 5

At the options menu, type:

CUP OF CHOICE
Unlock all cup races.

I HAVE THE KEY
Gives you all cars and tracks.

THAT TAKES ME BACK
Gives you access to all backward tracks.

CARMAGEDDON 2

Just type these in and you're set:

SMARTBASTARD
Completes the current race.

LEMMINGIZE
Turns off pedestrian AI.

FASTBAST
Speeds up pedestrians.

MRMAINWARING
Sends pedestrians into a panic.

FRYFRY
Gives pedestrians flame-throwers.

TINGTING
Repairs your car for free.

STICKYTYRES
Allows you to climb walls.

WOTATWATANI
Greases up your wheels.

MOONINGMINNIE
Decreases gravity.

TIMMYTITTY
Gives you additional time.

WETWET
Gives you additional credits.



If you find your vehicle getting beaten up in *Carmageddon 2*, just use the "tingting" cheat to fully repair it for free.

CARNIVORES

Type debugon while playing. The dinosaurs will ignore you until you shoot, your ammunition will be unlimited, and you can't be hurt by lava. While in this mode, type one of the following:

[CONTROL] ... Lets you run fast.
[SHIFT] + S ... Toggles slow motion.
[TAB] Shows you the full map.

ARE YOU A GAMING GENIUS?

Do you know the secrets to every PC game ever made? Want to share your love of gaming with the world? Then Strategy Central wants you for The Tip of the Month Club.

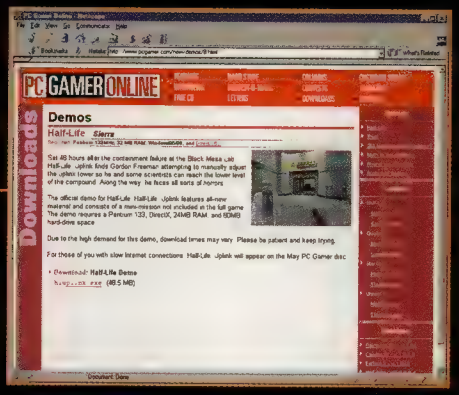
Every month we'll select a letter that gives the best advice or puzzle solution to a current game, and the lucky winner will receive a slew of prizes, including a *PC Gamer* T-shirt, a free strategy guide to inspire you, and a PC game pulled randomly from our mysterious and sinister Box O' Prizes. Send letters to:

PC Gamer Tip of the Month, Imagine Media
150 North Hill Drive, Brisbane, CA 94005
OR editor@pcgamer.com

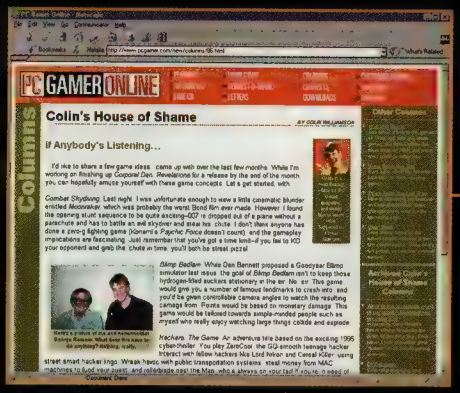
PC GAMER ONLINE:

EVERYTHING YOU LOVE ABOUT THE MAGAZINE — AND SO MUCH MORE.

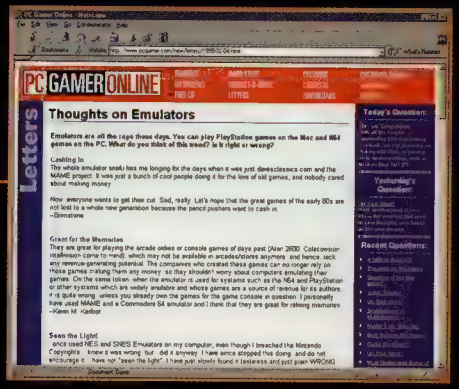
EXTENSIVE DEMOS, PATCHES, AND LEVELS SECTION



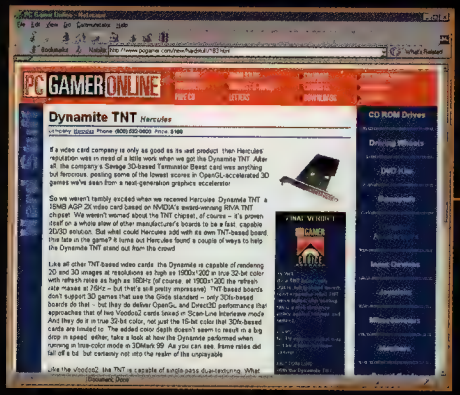
IRRESISTIBLE DAILY COLUMNS



A NEW, EASY-TO-USE INTERFACE



NEW SECTIONS YOU'VE BEEN ASKING FOR



There are a lot of places online where you can go for your fix of news, previews, and demos. But there is only one source that delivers the goods with the authority of the World's Best-Selling Games PC Magazine — *PC Gamer Online*. Each and every week we'll bring you the latest on the hottest games, news that matters, and demos of the games you're dying to play.

And we've got tons of content you won't find anywhere else. The Hard Stuff is now archived online, so getting the low-down on a piece of hardware is never more than a few mouse-clicks away.

The add-ons and levels on the CD have proven so popular that we've created *PC Gamer*'s Level Paradise, the only place online where you can find the best new levels for *Half-Life*, *StarCraft*, *Quake II*, and other games. If we post it, it's worth the download.

We also have columns from the likes of Editor-in-Chief Gary Whitta and the irreverent Colin Williamson. And let's not forget "Dear Greg," where tech editor Greg Vederman helps you with your personal problems as well as your tech problems.

And the fun doesn't stop there! We've got great contests, the Question of the Day, and tons of other cool stuff. Head on over to *www.pcgamer.com* to see what a website for real gamers looks like.

PC GAMER ONLINE

www.pcgamer.com

THE WEBSITE FOR REAL GAMERS.

LETTERS

April showers bring May flowers, as the saying goes. Spring is in full bloom around the *PC Gamer* offices, what with Greg finally taking a shower (FancyMan, where have you gone?), and Gary finally cleaning out Hammy's cage (Smoke is very grateful). How do you celebrate Spring? Drop us an E-mail or a snail mail letter and let us know. We anxiously await your reply!

Let's Hear From You!

Write to:
PC Gamer Letters
Imagine Media
150 North Hill Dr.,
Brisbane, CA 94005

or E-mail to:
peeceegee@aol.com
editor@pcgamer.com

Krusty Keyboard II

I was reading the letters in the February 1999 issue and saw the problem one of your readers had of getting Doritos spices and coloring all over his keyboard. I have this same problem, especially when it gets late and I just can't put the computer away because there's still five more levels in *Half-Life*. I have two ideas to solve the problem: One would be to keep at hand a warm, moist towel, like the ones they give you after meals at some restaurants and in the first-class section of an airliner; the other would be to use one of those plastic covers like they have over the cash registers at Burger King for each computer user (as well as one for guests) so there's no actual keyboard-finger contact.

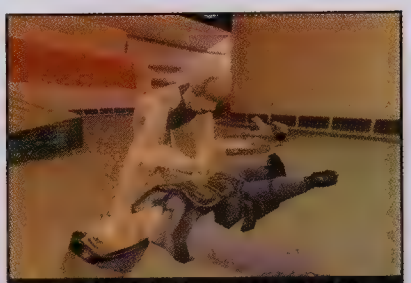
I must say that this is no laughing matter; I recently had to purchase a new keyboard because of degradation from just such a problem, and one can form a very clear picture as to the severity of this problem when you compare a brand-new, never-touched keyboard to the grease-covered monster that one has created!

—John Halbert, *via the Internet*

Those are good suggestions, John — but what's wrong with our original plan of keeping a small dog on the desk to lick your fingers?

The Opposite View

I am sick of reading letters from people who are upset with games that require patches. It's not as if the game companies are making these patches to purposely annoy you. They are simply trying to make the games more enjoyable to play. Patches are made for games that have minor defects. The only way for the game companies to stop these defects is to work on them, therefore



Some patches do just improve on games that were already working — like the patch that reduced lag in multi-player *Half-Life* — but far too many patches repair problems that should've been fixed before a game was released.

Nate Naysayers

A young reader known only as Nate recently brought a lot of ire down on his pointy little head with a diatribe about how videogame consoles are better than PCs (*PC Gamer* Letters, March 1999). Here are a couple of choice responses:

Dear Nate,
I found your letter to be most amusing; ignorance always amuses me. Now listen up: First, by referring to "most people in involved in computer games" as morons, you have insulted those of us who, unlike yourself, have found the happy medium between the computer and the console. We do not appreciate your opinions, Nate.

Second, while console systems do have their highlights (e.g. *GoldenEye, Final Fantasy VII, Xenogears, Zelda 6,* and *Bushido Blade*, to name a few), the moment I see a classic like *Fallout* or one of the Monkey Island games on a PlayStation, I promise, on my honor, to eat both of my Gravis Pro gamepads. Third, the following are rather wholesome gaming activities you cannot yet perform on a console system: Battle.net, Kali, Civnet, Mercnet, eight-player deathmatch, *EverQuest* — beginning to see a pattern? The world of gaming would be so one-dimensional without gems such as these.

Last, you seem to have forgotten that by labeling the computer industry as morons, you include prestigious corporations such as Squaresoft, Eidos, and Interplay, all of whom have had games published on both the PC and console platforms before.

So, to conclude, I would like you to think with your brain and not your mouth/pen/keyboard next time.

—Lee "Ganryu" Painton, *via the Internet*

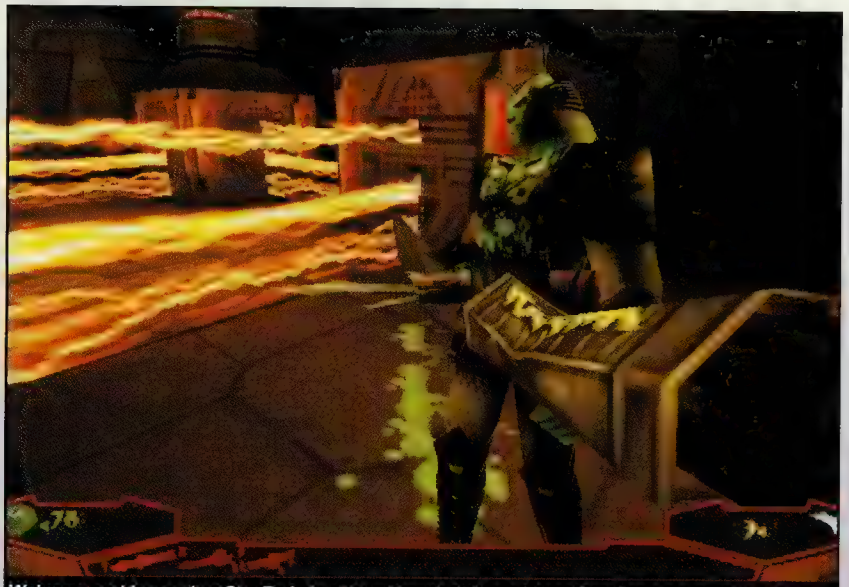
Unfortunately, because I am a PC gaming moron, I may not be able to construct a coherent sentence, here, but I thought I would give it a try...

I was wondering if I was the only one that saw the irony in Nate's use of the Internet to send in his wonderfully thoughtless diatribe on PC gaming. I wonder how much talent is required to type a letter using a videogame console's gamepad?

Thanks to Nate's letter, I am beginning to wonder if my purchase of my Dell XPS R450 was worth it. After using *AutoCAD* to analyze the final design specs on the X-33, *Word* to voice my ideas on these specs for my bosses, *Excel* to make sure that my department is still under budget, and *Outlook* to send all this information to the people who need it, I am starting to realize that a game console would make my life much easier.

It is so clear to me now: I should throw away this unique tool that allows my life to run much smoother as well as providing some of the most detailed and richly designed entertainment available. Instead, I should buy a gaming console, where I can play half-assed racing games with physics models that make the stirring straw look like an oar. I am looking forward to buying the new *Mortal Combat* (for the console die-hards: yes, the word "combat" starts with a "c") game so I can develop arthritic thumbs trying to discover the different "fatality" moves.

—Christian Smith, *via the Internet*



We've got nothing against Star Trek, but MicroProse's *Klingon Honor Guard* was a pretty big disappointment, even for fans of the classic TV and movie series.

not releasing the game for a long time. Then people write about how long it takes for game companies to release the games. Are people ever happy?

The solution for them is to make games that require patches. Patches are a lot more helpful than people make them out to be. Patches lower the lag on some of these games dramatically. I downloaded a recent patch for *Half-Life* and noticed that my "ping" went down by almost 75. I'm gonna say something that should have been said a long time ago...thank god for patches!

—Eric Bradt, *via the Internet*

That's an...interesting point of view, Eric. But we can only assume you're so strongly supportive of the release-now-patch-later trend because you didn't buy eXtreme PaintBrawl *or put several hours into Interplay's* Fallout 2*, only to find you needed to download a patch that was incompatible with your saved games. Sure, a patch is just the ticket when you've already laid down your heard-earned cash for an unfinished game and you're looking for something to make the damned thing work — but wouldn't it be much nicer if you didn't need that patch? If a game worked the way it's supposed to when you took it out of the box? It's something to think about, huh?*

Northern Exposure

I just picked up your March 1999 issue today and was reading the letters. I saw there is a guy from Norway who gets your magazine. Not too sure how far north he is up there, but I live in the Northwest Territories, in Inuvik. It takes forever for things to get up here, and we only get one, and I mean *one*, copy of your magazine up here a month. Usually I'm the one that gets it, but if not, I get a relative to send a copy up to me. We're pretty high above the Arctic Circle, too, and most of the things you see on TV are actually here — like an igloo church and a road made of ice.

—Sam Darters, *via the Internet*

Sorry you're having trouble getting PC Gamer *up in the Northwest Territories, Sam. It's puzzling, since the magazine is printed right there in Inuvik by a talented crew of musk oxen and arctic hares. In fact, the magazine is so common up there that the beautiful* Uummarmiutun *dialect of the Inuit language contains eleven different words for* PC Gamer*. If the problem continues, you may just have to subscribe....*

Right On

I just wanted to congratulate Mr. T. Liam McDonald (Jan. issue) and Michael "Sandmoose" Luton (Feb. issue) for their wonderful opinions on the game *Klingon Honor Guard*. I admit I am an avid Trekker (we are no longer called Trekkies) and will spend hundreds of dollars at a Trek Convention. I am also an avid fan of first-person shooters like *Doom, Quake, Duke Nukem, Hexen, Blood,* etc. Thanks to the CD-ROM edition of *PC Gamer*, I was able to play a demo of *Klingon Honor Guard*, and the staff was so right — playing the game is more of a chore than a pleasure. I didn't even bother finishing the demo, the game was so bad. At first, I thought Mr. McDonald gave the game a low score (60 percent) because he wasn't into the Star Trek thing. I almost bought the game three or four different times during the month between that issue and the issue that carried the demo and Sandmoose's choice words. I want to thank them and the CD editors for saving me a lot of money — now I can go buy *Half-Life* instead and be 37 percent happier!

—Michele Mason, *via the Internet*

We're always happy to help, Michele — and you should know we'd never give a game a low score just because it's based on Star Trek. (One thing, though: What's with all this "Trekker vs. Trekkie" stuff? Can't we all just call ourselves "Star Trek fans" and get along?)

Lovecraftian

I am a great fan of your magazine. However I have a question for you. I was reading your review in the Big Fat Holiday edition for *House of the Dead*, and you mentioned that it was full of Lovecraftian monsters. I also read that phrase in another PC games magazine. In the name of all that is good and holy, what does that mean? I looked up Lovecraftian in the dictionary, but it's not in there. It's driving me nuts. What is it?

—Zac Mazey, *via the Internet*

Oh, Zac! What are they teaching you kids these days? Don't they cover the classics in high school anymore? "Lovecraftian" comes from the name of H.P. Lovecraft, the author of classic horror stories like "Beyond the Wall of Sleep" and "The Dunwich Horror." He wrote from the turn of the century right into the 1930s, and his work appeared in pulp magazines like Weird Tales *and* Amazing Stories*. He even ghost-wrote a short story, "Under the Pyramids," for the legendary magician and escape artist, Harry Houdini. Lovecraft was, with the possible exception of Stephen King, the most influential horror writer of the 20th century. In fact, King's terrific short story, "Jerusalem's Lot," is a beautiful homage to the Lovecraftian style. And now you know.*

PCG

Coconut Monkey Corner

I am anxiously awaiting the arrival of *Gravy Trader*. I was wondering if you could answer a few questions during my seemingly eternal wait:
1. Will the gravy be brown gravy or chicken gravy?
2. Will the gravy be instant or homemade?
3. When will the Mashed Potato add-on disc be published?

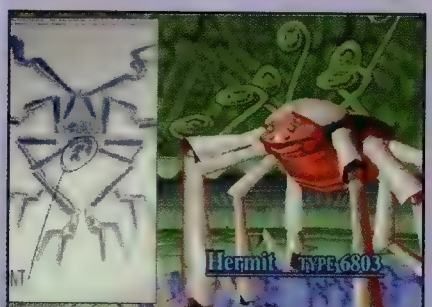
—Louis West, *via the Internet*

Coconut Monkey responds: *Yes. Thank you for asking.*

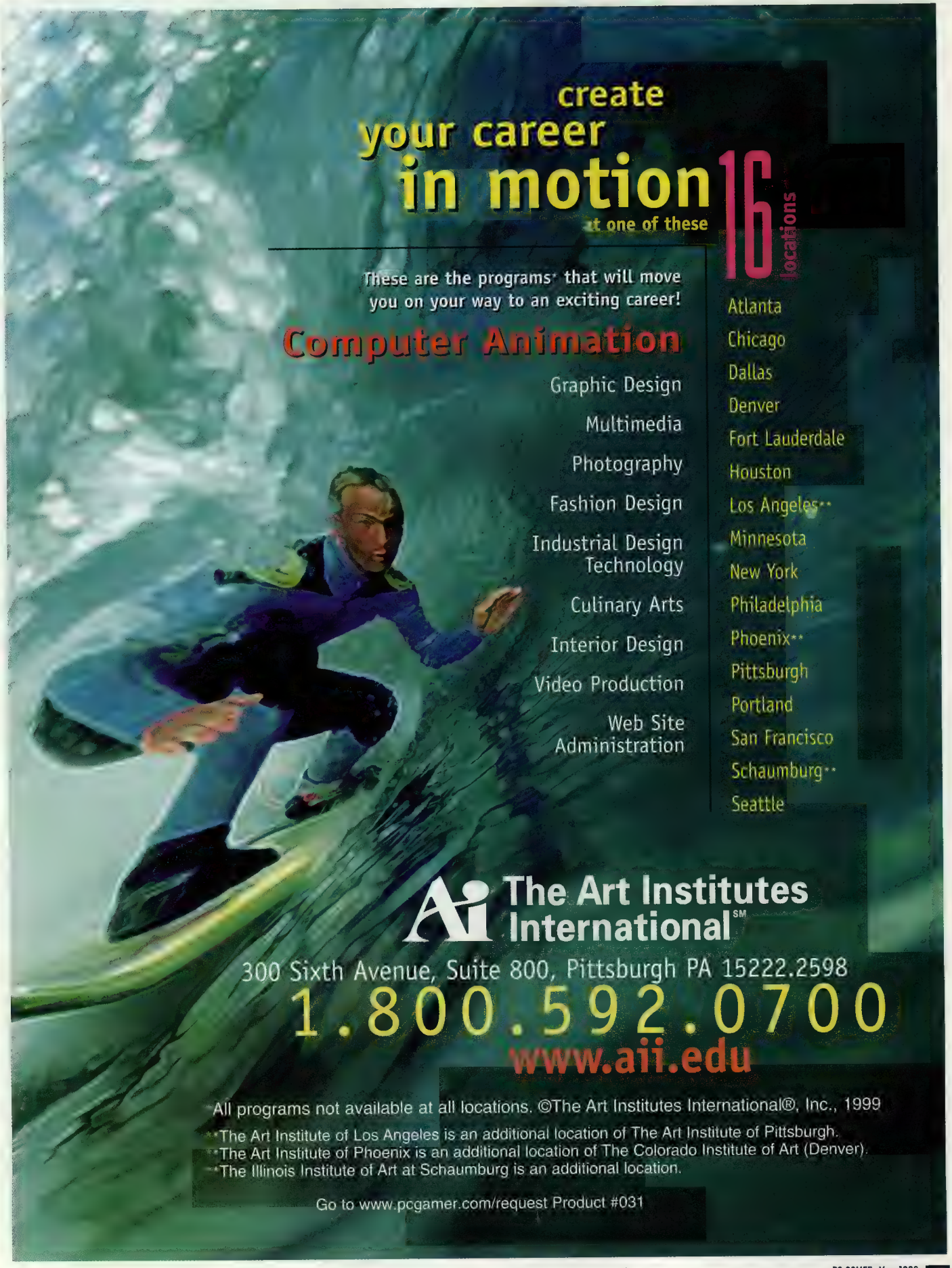
Have you guys seen that milk commercial with the animal crackers knocking over a glass of milk so they won't get eaten? The monkey animal cracker's voice is exactly like Coconut Monkey's. What is this, some sort of sick conspiracy? Is CM a sell-out? Or is this all just some misunderstanding?

—Ilya Lozovsky, *via the Internet*

Coconut Monkey responds: *Thursday. Thank you for asking.*



If kids these days are growing up not knowing what "Lovecraftian" means (his influence can be seen in the above game, *House of the Dead*), what other fine things are they missing out on?



create
your career
in motion
at one of these 16 locations

These are the programs* that will move you on your way to an exciting career!

Computer Animation

Graphic Design

Multimedia

Photography

Fashion Design

Industrial Design Technology

Culinary Arts

Interior Design

Video Production

Web Site Administration

Atlanta
Chicago
Dallas
Denver
Fort Lauderdale
Houston
Los Angeles**
Minnesota
New York
Philadelphia
Phoenix**
Pittsburgh
Portland
San Francisco
Schaumburg**
Seattle

The Art Institutes International℠

300 Sixth Avenue, Suite 800, Pittsburgh PA 15222.2598

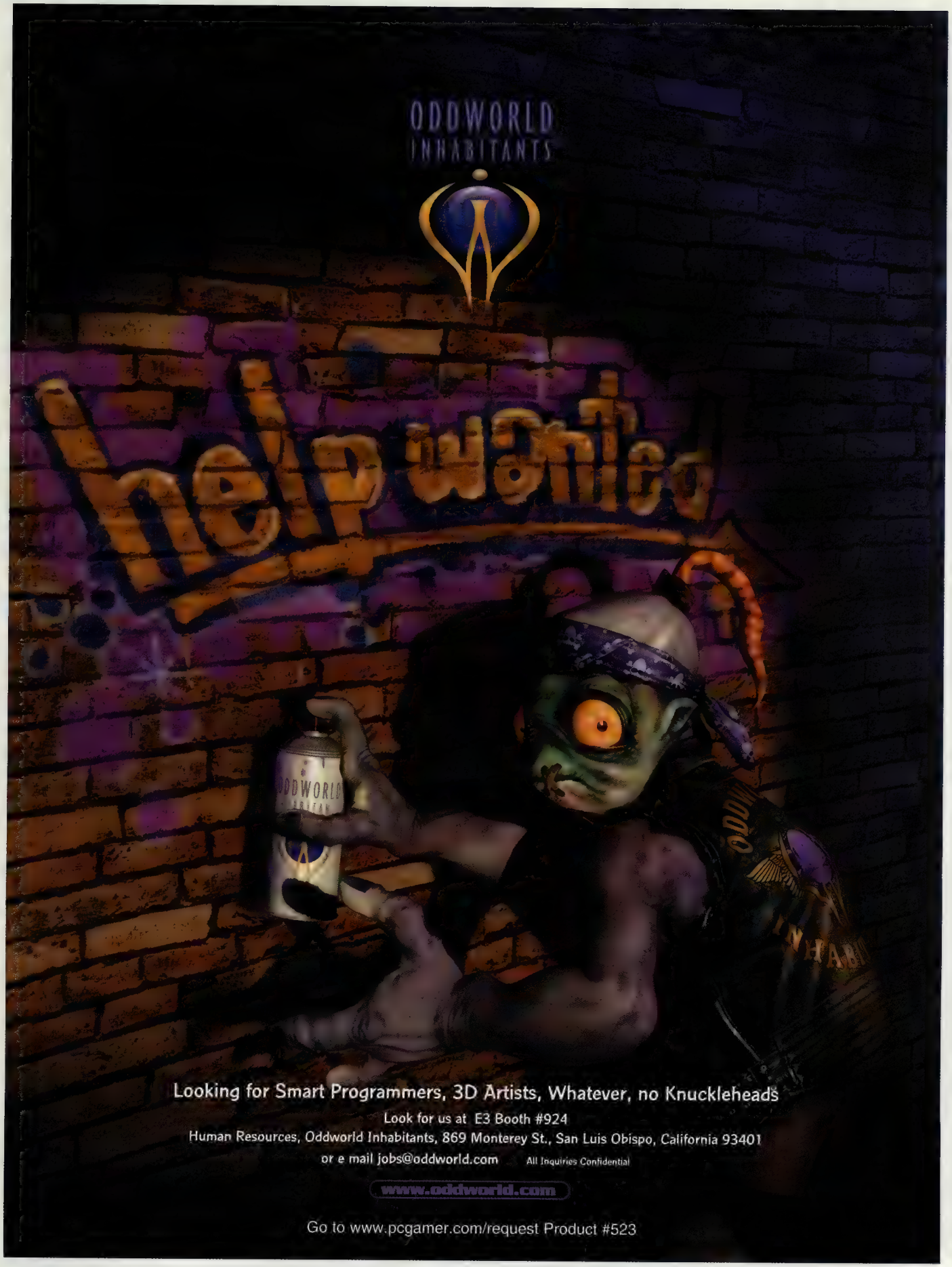
1.800.592.0700

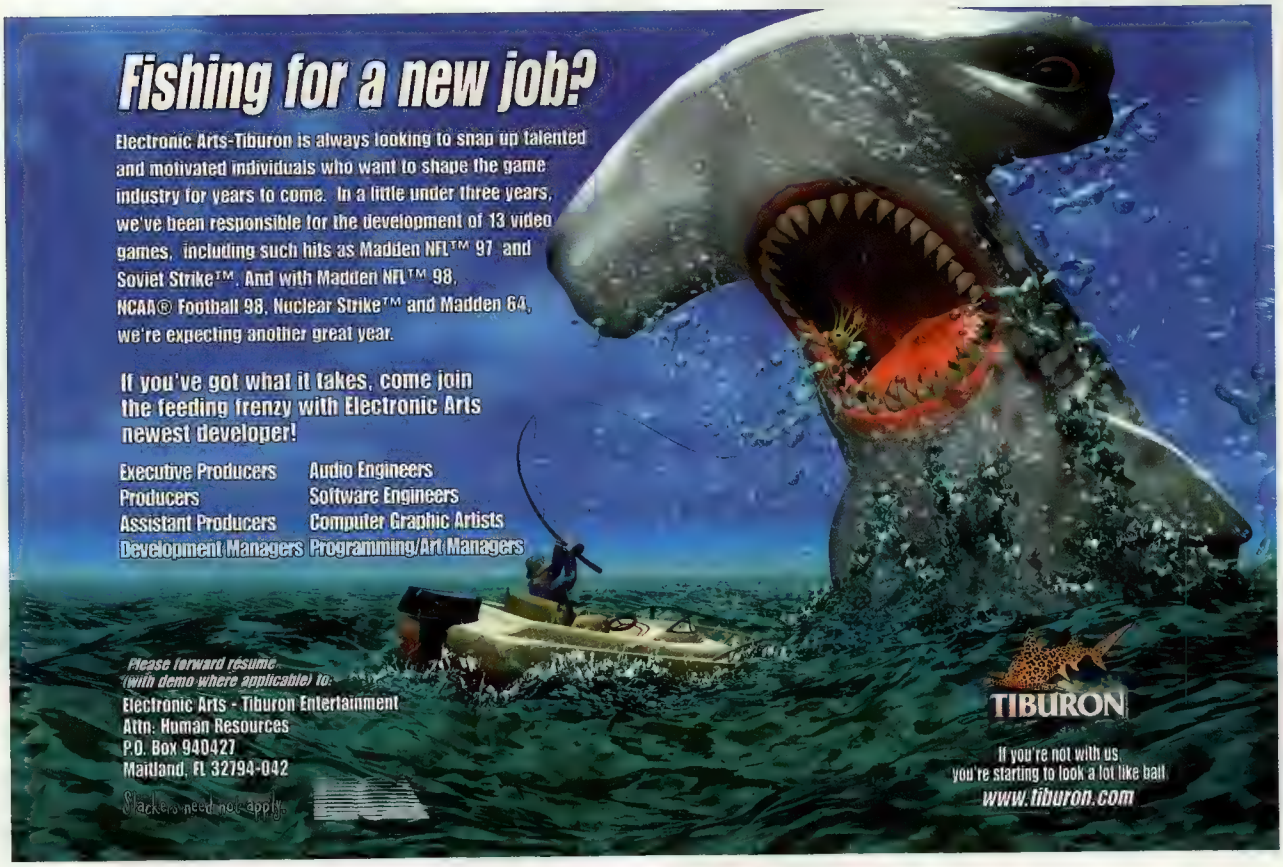
www.aii.edu

*All programs not available at all locations. ©The Art Institutes International®, Inc., 1999

**The Art Institute of Los Angeles is an additional location of The Art Institute of Pittsburgh.
**The Art Institute of Phoenix is an additional location of The Colorado Institute of Art (Denver).
**The Illinois Institute of Art at Schaumburg is an additional location.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #031


ODDWORLD
INHABITANTS
Help Wanted
Looking for Smart Programmers, 3D Artists, Whatever, no Knuckleheads
Look for us at E3 Booth #924
Human Resources, Oddworld Inhabitants, 869 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo, California 93401
or e mail jobs@oddworld.com All Inquiries Confidential
www.oddworld.com
Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #523

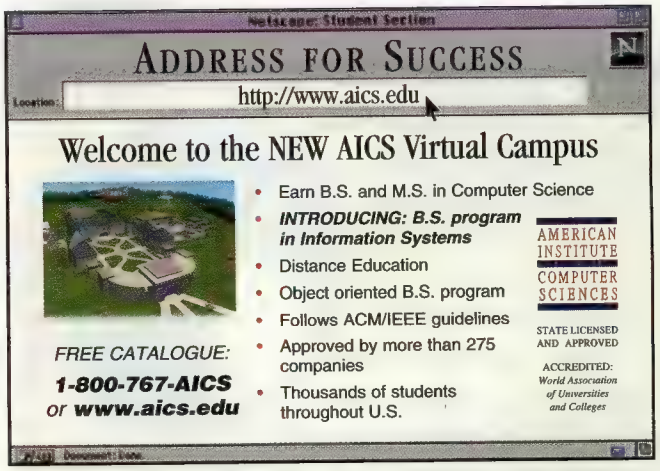


Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #769

PC GAMER

Fulfill all of your recruitment needs by advertising in the PC Gamer Recruitment Section!

TO PLACE AN AD, CALL JENNIFER CANAVAN AT (415) 468-4684 EXT 422



Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #915

ACTSOFT TECHNOLOGIES, INC.
TOLL FREE 888-228-7638(M-F 10AM-8PM EST)

WE ONLY SELL BRAND NEW SOFTWARE FOR PC'S

QUAKE II	$33.95	STARCRAFT BATTLE CHS	$44.95		
BLOOD 2	$34.95	RETURN TO KRONDOR	$33.95		
FIFA 99	$33.95	PRO PILOT 99	$34.95		
HALF LIFE	$34.95	TOMB RAIDER 3	$34.95		
CIVILIZATION 2 GOLD	$24.95	DARK VENGEANCE	$33.95		
MYTH II	$33.95	LINKS LS 99	$35.95		
NBA LIVE 99	$34.95	DELTA FORCE	$33.95		
BALDUR'S GATE	$34.95	RAILROAD TYCOON 2	$36.95		
NASCAR 99	$34.95	FALCON 4.0	$38.95		
QUEST FOR GLORY 5	$33.95	CAESAR III	$34.95		

BUY ONLINE AND SAVE 24 HRS WWW.888ACTSOFT.COM
TEL:(908)359-4923 FAX:(908)359-0833
FREE CATALOGS AND DEALER LISTING AVAILABLE

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #036

ADULT CD-ROM - MPEG - DVD - CDI - VHS VIDEO - OVER 1,000 TITLES
VISIT US AT: www.MidnightMM.com
E-MAIL: MidnightMM@MidnightMM.com

— CD-ROM INTERACTIVES / GAMES —		ULTRA VIXEN 2 (ASIAN ANIMATION)	$39
ACE IN THE HOLE (STR*P POKER)	$39	VIRTUAL S*X WITH ASIA (ASIAN)	$39
AN*L BLACKJACK	$39	VIRTUAL S*X WITH ROCKI	$39
B*TTBOYZ BLACKJACK (GAY)	$39	VIRTUAL S*X WITH FARRAH	$39
CYBERSTRIP BLACKJACK	$39	— CD-ROM STILLS / IMAGES —	
CYBERSTRIP POKER	$39	ACTRESSES UNCOVERED	$29
DIVA X: KANAKO (ASIAN)	$39	EURO DREAM MEN (GAY)	$27
DIVA X: KAROU (ASIAN)	$39	ADULT IMAGE LIB. 2 (2-DISCS)	$25
DIVA X: TAYLOR	$39	ASIAN APPETITE 2	$29
GIRLFRIEND DONNA	$39	DOMINANT DESIRES & MORE	$25
HOT & BOTTLED (3-DISCS)	$39	PRIVATE GIRLS SCHOOL	$22
2069 ORIENTAL S*X ODYS (2-DISCS)	$39	PREGNANT 2	$29
POKER PARTY	$39	ROPES AND CHAINS	$22
P*RNMANIA (2-DISCS)	$29	— CD-ROM 6-PACKS (6-DISCS) —	
REFORMATORY (GAY)	$37	YELLOW FEVER MOVIES (ASIAN)	$39
SEYMORE B*TTS 2 (2-DISCS)	$39	DIRTY DEBUTANTES 1 MOVIES	$39
ULTRA VIXEN 1 (ASIAN ANIMATION)	$39	DIRTY DEBUTANTES 2 (MPEG-DVD)	$39

VISA - MASTERCARD - AMERICAN EXPRESS - CHECKS - M/O's
ORDER TOLL FREE AT: 800-511-1123
or 323-468-9460 or FAX: 323-468-9464
MIDNIGHT MULTIMEDIA, 1147 E. BROADWAY, SUITE 34, GLENDALE, CA 91205 — U.S.A.
FREE SHIPPING ON ANY ITEM IN THIS AD — CALL-FAX FOR FREE BROCHURE

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #487

DISCOVER A WHOLE NEW WORLD OF CONTROL

IN PC RACING CONTROLLERS.

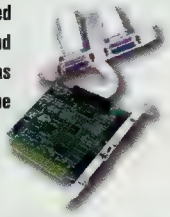


PDPI AND ACT LABS HAVE JOINED FORCES to develop new technology to advance the current level of response and precision in PC racing controllers. Dubbed Voltage Feed,™ the new PDPI RS cartridge, in conjunction with the award-winning ACT LABS RS Racing System™ and the ultra-high performance L4 Digital Game Card,™ brings a new dimension to PC racing controller performance. The cartridge is designed to translate the standard current feed signaling from the controller directly into the voltage format used by the L4's internal circuitry. The end result is rock-steady signaling from the RS wheel and pedals that is guaranteed jitter-free down to the level of the last bit. This kind of accuracy has never before been seen in any PC controller product, analog or digital. If you happen to be the type who will stop at nothing to win races, contact us by:

NOW JUST $59.95! FOR THE L4

MAIL: Pacific Digital Peripherals, Inc., 2591 E. Lee St., Simi Valley, CA 93065
PHONE: (805) 581-7023 E-MAIL: PDPI@msn.com WEBSITE: www.pdpi.net

DISCOVER THE L4 BY PDPI
WITH THE RS RACING SYSTEM CREATED BY ACT LABS



PLUS: NO MORE CRASHES TO THE DESKTOP – EVER. FOR ALL OTHER CRASHES, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN.

RS WHEEL PHOTO BY AARON LAUER (WWW.AARONLAUER.COM)

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #565

Action Software is your source for CD-ROM software. We are an international distributor of CD-ROM software with prices lower than wholesale. Browse our online catalog for the best prices on productivity and entertainment software for adults and children.



PC Games • Reference • Children's • Adult

Check out our fantastic prices and titles at:

www.actioncd.com

Wholesale Customers Welcome!

Action Software Inc

(440) 942-9091

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #009

R&G GAMES

We Buy & Sell New & Used PC CD Games & Hintbooks

2416 N. Mt. Juliet Rd., Mt. Juliet, TN 37122
Call 1-800-525-GAME or 615-773-9058 Fax 615-773-9059 Hrs 10am-7pm Mon-Fri
Email rggames@aol.com Visit our page: http://members.aol.com/RGGAMES/index.html
Shipping $6UPS $11Airborne **FREE UPS $75+Order** Credit Cards/Check/Money Order accepted

Used Titles					
Age of Empires CD	$22	Imperialism CD	$20	Sin CD	$22
Alpha Centari CD	$30	Jedi Knight CD	$22	Starcraft CD	$24
Army Men CD	$22	JK Mysteries of Sith CD	$15	Tex Murphy Overseer CD	$22
Baldur's Gate CD	$29	Kings Quest 8 CD	$26	Tresspasser CD	$28
Battlezone CD	$22	Klingon Honor Guard CD	$26	Unreal CD	$27
Betrayal in Antara CD	$15	Longbow 2 CD	$25	Warcraft Battlechest CD	$18
Blade Runner CD	$22	Lords of Magic SE CD	$25	Warlords 3 Darklords RisCD	$20
Ceasar 3 CD	$28	M1 Tank Platoon 2 CD	$22	Wing Commander 5 CD	$22
Civilization 2 CD	$20	Madden 99 CD	$26	X-Com Apocalypse CD	$18
Civilization 2 Scenario CD	$15	MAX 2 CD	$18	X-Com Interceptor CD	$22
Com&Con Red Alert CD	$20	Mechwarrior 2 Merc CD	$20	X-Files CD	$24
Commandos CD	$28	Mechcommander CD	$23	Zork Grand Inquisitor CD	$26
Curse Monkey Island CD	$20	Might & Magic 6 CD	$20	***New Titles***	
Deathtrap Dungeon CD	$20	MS Combat Flight Sim CD	$27	3D Pinball Lost ContinentCD	$27
Diablo CD	$18	MS Flight Simulator 98 CD	$27	Baldour's Gate CD	$39
Descent Freespace CD	$22	Nam AKA Napalm CD	$20	Falcon 4.0	$39
Dominion CD	$15	Nascar Racing 2 CD	$18	Fallout 2 CD	$38
Dune 2000 CD	$20	Need for Speed 3 CD	$27	Halflife CD	$38
F-15 CD	$22	NFL Gameday 99 CD	$28	Heretic 2 CD	$38
Fallout CD	$20	NBA Live 98 CD	$15	Lords of Magic CD	$30
Fallout 2 CD	$28	Panzer General 2 CD	$22	Max 2 CD	$18
Final Fantasy 7 CD	$20	Quake 2 CD	$25	MS Combat Flight Sim CD	$32
Gangsters CD	$26	Quake 2 Exp Reckoning	$15	MS Flight Sim 98 CD	$32
Gettysburg CD	$20	Rage of Mages CD	$26	Of Light & Darkness CD	$18
Get Medieval CD	$24	Rainbow 6 CD	$29	Panzer Commander CD	$36
Grim Fandango CD	$29	Railroad Tycoon 2 CD	$28	Return to Krondor CD	$39
Half-Life CD	$28	Rebellion CD (Star Wars)	$20	Sandwarriors CD	$32
Hellfire CD	$15	Redguard CD	$25	Sim City 3000 CD	$36
Heroes of Might & Magic 2	$20	Sanitarium CD	$28	Tomb Raider 3 CD	$38
Heroes M&M 2 Exp Pak	$15	7 Kingdom Ancient AdvCD	$22	VR Powerboat Racing CD	$29
IAF CD	$26	Shogo CD	$28	X-com Apocalypse CD	$29
		Soldiers at War CD	$15	X-com Interceptor CD	$30

Want to sell us your strategy guides & games: Games must be complete with original boxes, CD's & manuals & any accessories all in good condition, working & scratch free. Make a list including your name, address & phone number if under 10 you can call for prices. Have list and pen ready when calling. Over 10 items fax, email or write. Prices are good for 2 weeks. Do not send unpriced items. Unacceptable items will be returned at your expense min. $6 ups per box. Prices & availability subject to change.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #681

REQUEST-O-MATIC

Follow these four easy steps to get all the product information you desire!

1. Go to: *http://www.pcgamer.com/request.*
2. Go to and click on Request-O-Matic — your online reader service.
3. Select the product category from a complete list, or select the vendor's number from the list below for up-to-date info on your favorite games.
4. Follow the format to receive all the info you desire. You will also be able to access the vendors' web sites from Request-O-Matic.

ADVERTISER INDEX

COMPANY	PRODUCT	PAGE #	INFO #
3dfx Interactive	VooDoo	146-147	762
3DO Company	Heroes III	IBC	789
3DO Company	Might and Magic VII	32-32a	790
3DO Company	Requiem	42-43	788
989 Studios	Everquest	130-131	752
Access Software	Links Extreme	132	017
Accolade	Slave Zero	103	026
Act Soft Technologies	Marketplace	205	036
Action Software, Inc.	Marketplace	206	009
Activision	Quake III: Arena	IFC-1	002
Activision	Civ:Call to Power	28-29	028
Activision	Heavy Gear 2	82-83	022
AlienWare PC Systems	Systems	142	091
American ANKO	Force Feedback Racing Wheel	166	016
American Inst. for Computer Science	Recruitment	205	915
Art Institute International	Career in Motion	203	031
ATI Technologies	Rage Fury (Speed Kills)	65	013
AT&T Inter@ctivity	Cyberlounge	139	——
Aureal Semiconductor	A3D	113	029
Benwin-Kwong Quest, LLC	Benwin Speakers	145	365
Bethesda Softworks	Magic and Mayhem	126	041
Bethesda Softworks	F16 Agressor	166	042
Blizzard Entertainment	StarCraft Exp.: Brood War	34-35	114
Bungie Software	Myth II	18	046
Cavedog Ent.	Total Annihilation: Kingdoms	56-57	248
CD ROM Playback	Cyberlounge	138	——
Creative Labs Inc.	The Live Experience	OBC	108
D-Link Systems	Networking Kit	159	910
Dell Computer Corp.	Systems	17	—
Earthlink Network	Earthlink ISP	135	179
Eidos Interactive	WarZone	24-25	195
Eidos Interactive	Thief	72-73	177
Eidos Interactive	Commandos Mission Pack	74-75	164
Eidos Interactive	WarZone	76-77	195
Eidos Interactive	Legacy of Kain	104-105	196
Eidos Interactive	Braveheart	150-151	200
Electronic Arts	Need for Speed III	38-39	185
Electronic Arts	NASCAR	194-195	900
Electronics Boutique	Catalog	91-96	010
Electronics Boutique	Electronics Boutique Online	21	188
Falcon Northwest Computer Systems	Mach V	173	205
Fox Interactive	Alien vs Predator	121-123	204
GT Interactive	Unreal Tournament	4-5	——
GT Interactive	Abe's Exodus	71	——
Heat.Net	Frag Someone	23	747
Interactive Magic	Shadow Company	49,51,53	321
Interactive Magic	Mortyr	110	359
Interactive Magic	Flashpoint	156	361
Interplay	Descent 3	12-13	325
Interplay	Baldur's Gate	14	329
Interplay	Starfleet Command 3	44-45	323
Interplay	Capture, Collect, Redeem	106	331
Interplay	Planescape:Torment	186-187	330
LucasArts	X-Wing Alliance	160-161	447
MicroProse	Mech Warrior Gatefold	48a	506
MicroProse	Rollercoaster Tycoon Loops	58-59	283
MicroProse	Star Trek: Birth of the Federation	87	508
Microsoft	Midtown Madness	11	——
Midnight Multimedia	Marketplace	205	487
Mindscape	Prince of Persia	54-55	749
Oddworld Inhabitants	Recruitment	204	523
Origin Systems	Alpha Centauri	66-67	——
Pacific Digital Peripherals, Inc.	PDPI	206	565
Psygnosis	Rollcage	100	612
R&G Games	Marketplace	206	681
Red Storm Ent.	Force 21	193	685
Sierra FX	Quest For Glory V	33	741
Sierra Studios	Half Life	6-7	094
Sierra Studios	Homeworld	112a	——
Sportsline	Cyberlounge	140	——
SSI	Rites of War	114-115	745
SSI	Flanker 2.0	162-163	760
SSI	Imperialism II	185	160
Strategy First	Man O War II	22	319
Strategy First	Clans	170	320
T-3 Internet	Cyberlounge	141	—
THQ Inc.	Sini Star	116-117	783
Thrustmaster, Inc.	Talk 'n Play	109	781
Tiburon Entertainment	Recruitment	205	769
U.S. Navy	Recruitment	88	——
Westwood Studios	C&C: Tiberian Sun	26-27	842
Westwood Studios	Lands of Lore III	178-179	849
PC Gamer	*T-Shirt*	*177*	——
PC Gamer	*PCG Online*	*200*	——
PC Gamer	*E3 Contest Page*	*185*	——

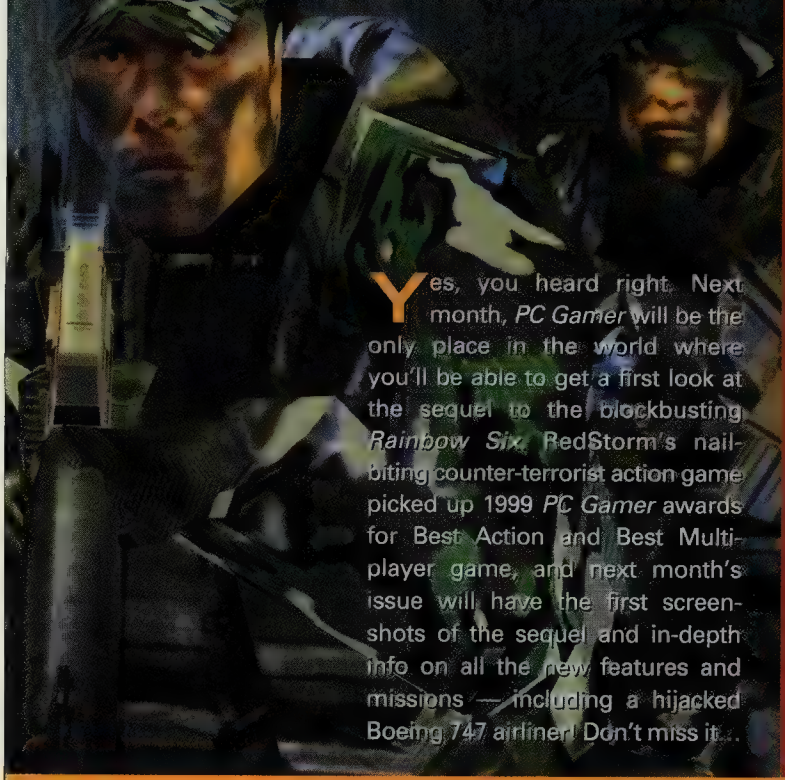
NEXT TIME...

How quickly May becomes June. How quickly summertime rolls around, and we find ourselves closing the blinds to stop that pesky sunlight glaring off our PC monitors...

Vol. 6 No. 6 Goes On Sale **May 11** Don't Miss It!

Tom Clancy's ROGUE SPEAR

THE SEQUEL TO *RAINBOW SIX*



Yes, you heard right. Next month, *PC Gamer* will be the only place in the world where you'll be able to get a first look at the sequel to the blockbusting *Rainbow Six*, RedStorm's nail-biting counter-terrorist action game picked up 1999 *PC Gamer* awards for Best Action and Best Multiplayer game, and next month's issue will have the first screenshots of the sequel and in-depth info on all the new features and missions — including a hijacked Boeing 747 airliner! Don't miss it...

THE PCG HOT 100

Once again, we'll be beating E3 to the punch by showcasing the hottest new games coming your way between now and the end of the year — a *hundred* in all! We'll have all the new info on:

Duke Nukem Forever
C&C: Tiberian Sun
Quake III Arena
Tribes 2
X-COM Alliance
Daikatana
Ultima Ascension
Dungeon Keeper II
Diablo II
Max Payne
MechWarrior III
Madden NFL 2000
The Indestructibles

and many more! It's the only 1999 preview you'll need!

Plus... REVIEWS OF THESE HOT NEW GAMES:


Heroes of Might and Magic III


South Park


Starsiege


NASCAR Revolution

...AND MANY MORE!

PC GAMER
MAY 1999
Publisher • Matthew A. Firme

EDITORIAL STAFF
Editor-in-Chief • Gary Whitta
Editor • Dan Bennett
Managing Editor • Lisa H. Renninger
Disc Editor • Michael Wolf
Multimedia Editor • William Harms
Technical Editor • Greg Vederman
Web Engineer • Michael Luton
Senior Writer • William R. Trotter
Assistant Editor • Rob Smolka
Art Director • Dean H. Renninger
Assistant Art Director • Jay Vidheecharoen
Photographer • Aaron Lauer

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Jason Bates • Joel Durham • T. Liam McDonald • Joseph Novicki • Colin Williamson

ADVERTISING STAFF
National Advertising Mgr. • Karen Lee James
S. Regional Account Mgr. • Robin John Rosales
N. Regional Account Mgr. • Amy Arnold
Account Manager • Melissa Marra
Marketing Manager • Ellen M. W. Virden
Marketplace Manager • Jennifer Canavan

PRODUCTION STAFF
Production Director • Richard Lesovoy
Production Coordinator • Jose L. Urrutia
Advertising Coordinator • Jennifer Canavan

CIRCULATION STAFF
Subscription Director • Tina Rodich
Fulfillment Manager • Peggy Mores
Direct Mail Manager • Amy Nibbi
Direct Marketing Coord. • Tracy Green
Newsstand Marketing Spc. • Christopher Boily

International Licensing Representative
Robert J. Abramson and Associates, Inc.
720 Post Road, Scarsdale, NY 10583

Audit Bureau of Circulations

imagine MEDIA WITH PASSION
Imagine Media, Inc., 150 North Hill Dr., Brisbane, CA 94005
(415) 468-4684 www.imaginemedia.com

CEO • Chris Anderson
Vice President/CFO • Tom Valentino
Vice President/Circulation • Holly Klingel
General Counsel • Charles Schug

IMAGINE GAMES DIVISION:
President • Jonathan Simpson-Bint
(PC Gamer, Imagine Games Network, Games Business, PSM, PC Accelerator, Next Generation, The Den: Daily Entertainment Network)

IMAGINE DIGITAL DIVISION:
President • Mark Gross
(Business 2.0, ChickClick, MacAddict, Maximum PC, PowerStudents Network)

Imagine Media is aimed at people who have a passion. A passion for games. For business. For computers. Or for the Internet. Or trout. These are passions we share.
Our goal is to feed your passion with the greatest magazines, Web sites, and CD-ROMs imaginable.
We love to innovate, we love to have fun, and we have a cast-iron rule always to deliver spectacular editorial value. That means doing whatever it takes to give you the information you need. With any luck, we'll even make you -sniff!- smile sometimes...
Thanks for joining us.

It was never supposed to happen this way. Greg thought he could steal around behind his girlfriend's back without raising suspicion. He was wrong.

There before him stood the woman who had loved and nurtured him for seven long years — not knowing of Greg's "other" life with Roxy. In her right hand she gripped her instrument of death: a butcher knife — purchased on their first trip to Cannery Row; that same trip where Greg first asked Sara to marry him. In her other white-knuckled fist she held the evidence: a letter written to Roxy — seemingly in Greg's handwriting.

The knife felt cold at first — cold in a way that could only mean death. Greg screamed, but by then it was much too late...

TO BE CONTINUED



CONQUER AN EMPIRE FROM THE COMFORT OF YOUR OWN HOME







Build an Empire From the Comfort Of Your Own Home

- Beautiful graphics - high resolution 3D rendered graphics and environments
- Play at your own pace - turn based gameplay and combat allows you to set the pace
- Easy to use interface - simply designed to get you up and playing within minutes
- Huge fantasy world to explore and dominate - three different campaigns, and over 20 single scenarios
- Over 150 different combat units to control - 8 different troop types, all with upgrades and customizations
- Enhanced multi-player support - play with up to 7 other players on one computer, or through a LAN or Internet connection







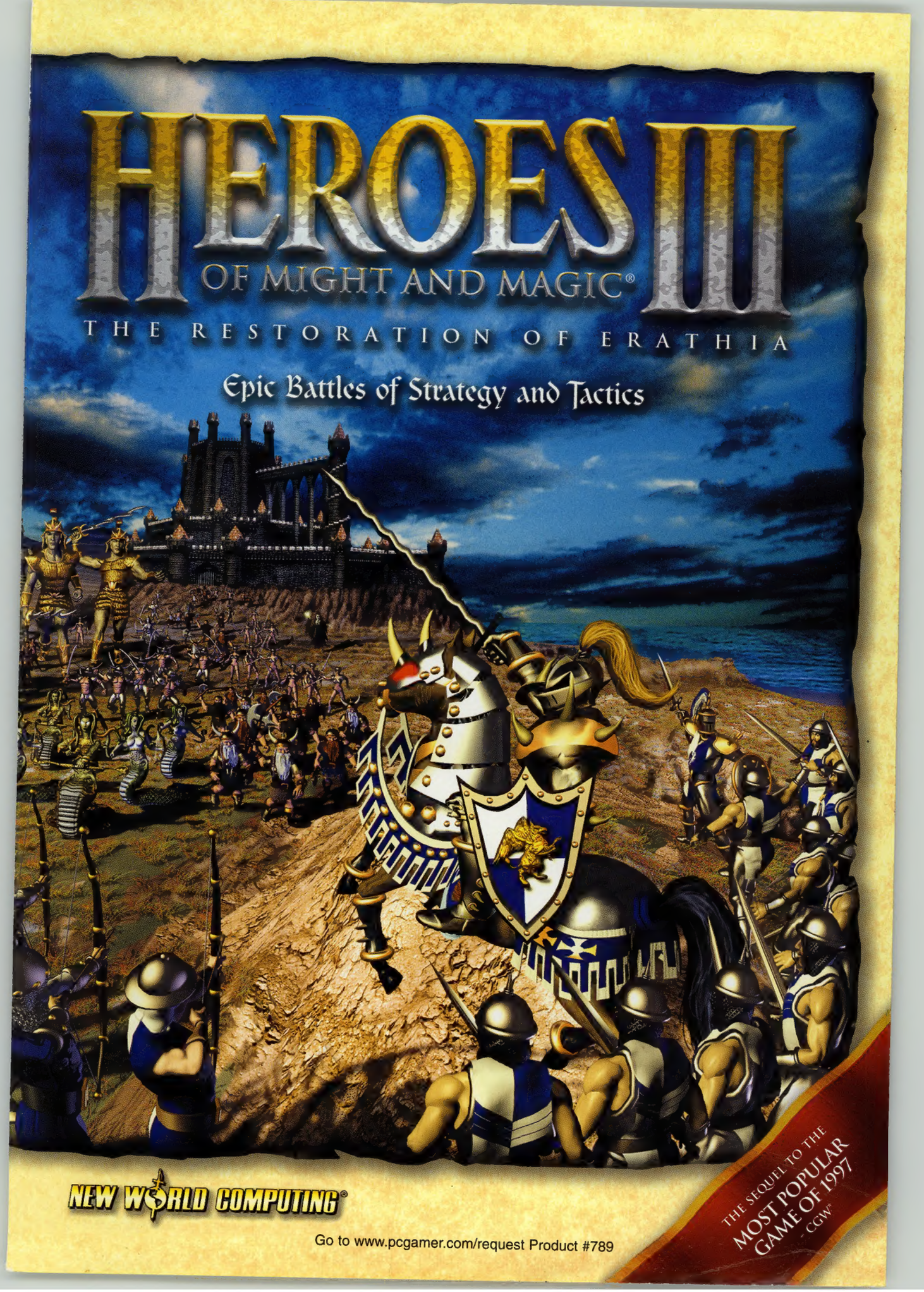
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

www.heroes3.com

©1999 The 3DO Company. All rights reserved. New World Computing, Heroes of Might and Magic, 3DO, and their respective logos, are trademarks or registered trademarks of The 3DO Company in the U.S. and/or other countries. All other trademarks and/or trade names belong to their respective owners. New World Computing is a division of The 3DO Company.

*September Issue of Computer Gaming World, Top 100 Chart

3DO™


HEROES III
OF MIGHT AND MAGIC®
THE RESTORATION OF ERATHIA
Epic Battles of Strategy and Tactics
NEW WORLD COMPUTING®
THE SEQUEL TO THE MOST POPULAR GAME OF 1997 - CGW®
Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #789

Live the experience!

the Live! experience.



awesome **AUDIO**





explosive **GRAPHICS**





thrilling **PC-DVD**





sensational **SPEAKERS**



It's a totally different way to stimulate your senses.

The Live! experience is a totally different way to interact with your PC. Our multimedia upgrades take you places you've never been. It's seeing and hearing for the first time. It's being there without ever leaving your seat. It's the adventure of a lifetime. Turn your PC into an extraordinary entertainment center — at an incredibly affordable price.

Go to www.pcgamer.com/request Product #108

PC MAGAZINE EDITORS' CHOICE
December 1, 1998
Creative Labs
Graphics Blaster RIVA TNT

PC GAMER EDITORS' CHOICE

CREATIVE®

www.soundblaster.com/golive/

WIN 100 WINDOWS MAGAZINE 1998

1998 MVP PCComputing Winner

©1999 Creative Technology Ltd. All brand or product names listed are trademarks or registered trademarks and are property of their respective holders. If you're not on the net, give us a call at 1.800.998.5227 for more information.